

Soviet emigre wave continues

TEL AVIV (R) — Thousands of Soviet Jewish immigrants landed in Israel Friday and Saturday in an airlift triggered by the uncertain political situation in the Soviet Union. Israel Radio said more than 5,500 Soviet Jews had landed at Tel Aviv airport since Friday morning and more were expected by Sunday. On Friday, the Israeli government told state airline officials to prepare all available planes for a major airlift of Soviet Jews from Bucharest, Budapest and Warsaw, transit points for Soviet Jews. There are no direct scheduled flights between Israel and the Soviet Union and no full diplomatic relations since Moscow broke ties over the 1967 war. "We have been urged by the minister of transport to make every possible aircraft available for this over the weekend and have obtained special permission to fly on the Sabbath (Saturday)," said Nachman Kleiman, spokesman for the state-owned airline El Al. Friday. The airlift followed the shock resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze Thursday, which raised fears among Jews that President Mikhail Gorbachev's liberal emigration policies might be reversed.

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Iraq alerts schools, colleges

BAGHDAD (AP) — All universities, schools and other educational facilities in Iraq will close immediately in the event of an attack against the country by U.S.-led military forces in the Gulf region, state-run television said Saturday night. There are an estimated 2.5 million students in Iraq's universities and other schools. Mid-term examinations are scheduled to begin Jan. 15, the deadline the U.N. Security Council set for Iraq to withdraw troops from Kuwait or face possible military action. Since the deadline was set on Nov. 29, Iraq has stepped up civil defence preparations. It had planned a practice evacuation of the two million residents of the western half of Baghdad Saturday in a drill similar to one held on Friday in the eastern half. The plans were halted without explanation. However, since Friday is the holiday the earlier drill did not force schools and colleges to close as it would have on Saturday. A senior official said plans were being made for an evacuation drill of the entire capital.

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Turkey reinforces Iraqi border

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey has sent an additional 8,000 paratroopers to its border with Iraq and will add 1,500 infantry soldiers in coming days, a newspaper reported Saturday. The Istanbul daily Cumhuriyet also quoted unidentified military sources as saying that Iraq also increased its forces in the area. The Turkish paratroopers were sent to the border area in the past 10 days, the paper said. The 1,500 infantry soldiers will be transferred there from Thrace in northwestern Turkey, it said. Not counting the deployment reported by Cumhuriyet, Turkey has about 100,000 troops along the border with Iraq. Most were sent there shortly after Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2. No officials were available to confirm the Cumhuriyet report Saturday.

PFLP opens office in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) reopened its office in Baghdad Saturday, 11 years after it was closed by the Iraqi government following a split with Damascus. Abdul Rahim Malouh, a member of the PFLP's politburo, said reopening the office was meant to express solidarity with Iraq in its standoff with the United States in the Gulf crisis. Malouh said the Damascus-based PFLP would fight alongside Iraq if war erupted, but he did not elaborate.

Gorbachev threatens tough measures

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Saturday threatened to use the full force of his powers unless leaders in the republic of Moldova and minority groups there act within 10 days to end ethnic conflict. Gorbachev, who has authority to send in troops and declare presidential rule over troubled spots, warned of "necessary measures" but did not spell out action he has prepared to take. He issued a decree ordering the dissolution of two self-styled republics set up earlier this year by the southwestern republic's Turkish and Russian minorities.

Charles in Gulf

SAUDI ARABIA (R) — Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, said Saturday that his country's troops were ready for war in the Gulf. "They are highly professional and incredibly well-prepared," he told reporters at a forward base. He chatted with U.S. marines and then rode atop a Challenger tank named "Churchill" for 15 kilometres across the sand to visit British armoured, engineering and infantry units.

Habre still a threat, Deby says

ALGIERS (R) — Ousted Chad President Hissene Habre could try to destabilise the country from exile, according to the man who overthrew him. In an interview with the official Algerian news agency, new President Idris Deby said Habre had "quite a large war chest (and) can undertake destabilisation action in Chad." Habre fled to Cameroon, Chad's neighbour to the southeast, and later to Senegal as rebels led by Deby and equipped by Libya seized control of his country last month.

Israel intercepts Lebanese ferry

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — An Israeli gunboat has intercepted a Lebanese ferry en route to Cyprus and detained eight Lebanese and Palestinian passengers, sources said Saturday. They said Israeli soldiers stopped the ferry Friday night off Sidon, 40 kilometres south of Beirut, and detained two Lebanese, including a policeman, and six Palestinians and escorted them to Israel.

Jordan disappointed over Resolution 681 — Qasem

It is an attempt to evade most basic issue

- Passing reference to Jerusalem is deplorable
- Israel terrorising Palestinians to make room

AMMAN (J.T.) — A U.N. Security Council resolution adopted Thursday criticising Israeli policies towards Palestinians is an attempt to evade the Middle East's most basic issue, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem said Saturday.

"The U.N. Security Council resolution forms an attempt to prevent (the world from) confronting the basic issue in the Middle East and the possibility of providing solutions that would help in bolstering real and comprehensive peace in the region," Qasem said in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Resolution 681 recommends measures to monitor treatment of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories. But, after U.S. pressure, it mentioned only in a separate non-binding statement a call for an international conference to address the Palestinian issue.

Qasem said that under a pro-

gramme for the occupied territories the Israeli government was trying "to terrorise the Palestinian people in order to accommodate thousands of Soviet Jews."

Qasem deplored the fact that Resolution 681 made only passing reference in its introduction to Jerusalem as part of the Israeli-occupied territories.

"We really wished here in Jordan to see some members of the Security Council dealing with the Palestinian problem with the same momentum in which they dealt with the Gulf crisis," Qasem said.

"Jordan rejects the double standard policy in dealing with issues in the Middle East," Qasem said. "International legitimacy should not be a selective process applied in one area and ignored in another."

"Resolution 681 is weak and void of its objective contents and lacked the seriousness needed for dealing effectively with the Middle East issue," the minister

said. "When some nations avoid considering Jerusalem as an integral part of the occupied Arab territories, it means that they are giving concessions to Israel, and it implies that they deal with the Jewish state on the basis of de facto situation, a status which Israel aims to consecrate," the minister said.

"Jordan had wished to see the Security Council members dealing with the Palestine question on equal footing with the Gulf crisis."

The minister criticised the way in which the council dealt with the idea of an international peace conference and said: "Jordan was not at all happy because the council ignored emphasising the need for convening an international peace conference and sufficed itself with a non-binding statement on the prospects for such a conference by saying that the council reaffirms

(Continued on page 5)

19 U.S. sailors die in Haifa ferry mishap

HAIFA (Agencies) — Nineteen U.S. sailors on shore leave from the Gulf crisis drowned within meters of their aircraft carrier on Saturday after a ferry returning them from Christmas revelry capsized in the Israeli port of Haifa.

A U.S. embassy spokesman revised the toll to 19 dead from 20 given earlier by his Ambassador William Brown, saying one victim had been counted twice.

The ferry with about 100 Americans from the USS Saratoga aboard sank within seconds under 1.5 metre high waves at midnight on Friday, U.S. and Israeli military officials said.

American and Israeli rescue teams searched through the night for the missing after the Israeli ferry Tuvia went under shortly after midnight in windy, choppy seas about 200 metres from the aircraft carrier Saratoga.

Forty-seven sailors were hospitalized and 38 rescued unharmed from choppy seas, according to Israel Radio. It said four were in serious condition and most of the others were released later Saturday morning.

It was the deadliest accident involving American servicemen taking part in the multinational

force arrayed against Iraq and raised the number of Americans killed in Operation Desert Shield to at least 73.

The sailors were among hundreds who spent their holiday Liberty Friday in Haifa, some with wives and girlfriends who had flown from home to meet them.

The Saratoga has a crew of about 1,500. Army spokesman Ranaan Gissen said six of the bodies were found trapped in the two-deck, 17-metre ferry about 21 metres below the surface of the Mediterranean.

Officials said at mid-afternoon that two other sailors still could be missing. Saratoga commanders recalled all 1,920 men from shore leave.

There was no official report on the cause of the sinking. Witnesses said they believed there were too many people in the back of the ferry.

Shaul Raziel, director of the Israel port authority, said a combination of events probably caused the accident. "The sea-ting, or movement in one direction, a sudden wave, and the disaster happened," he told

Survivors interviewed in their

beds at Haifa's Rambam hospital said the navy-chartered ferry had taken on water in high seas, then suddenly overturned as it was hit by two large waves.

"It felt like we were going against the waves, so we would go up and come down ... and everytime we would come back down water would come in," said seaman Michael Benjamin, 19, of San Antonio.

"We were going on the waves, and I just noticed one that was bigger than normal and then we noticed another one that was bigger than normal. The next thing I know, all I saw coming in was water. I was tilted forward, I heard a lot of yelling, 'she's going down.'"

Benjamin suffered a neck injury when he was hit in the water by one of the rescue boats.

Mary Mobley, wife of the Saratoga's captain, said information hot lines had been set up for crewmen's families in the United States and she appealed for relatives to stay calm while some 1,900 crewmen on shore were returned to the ship for a roll call.

"I wanted to let the moms, dads and wives not to be really

(Continued on page 5)

Bush contradicts Waller, says forces ready for war

CAMP DAVID, Maryland (Agencies) — President George Bush, contradicting a top military commander, said Saturday allied forces in the Gulf are prepared to deal "vigorously" with any Iraqi "provocation" on a moment's notice.

Bush sought to put to rest comments by Lieutenant-General Calvin A.H. Waller, the deputy commander of allied forces in the Gulf, that the troop will not be battle ready by the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait.

"If there was some clear provocation 10 minutes from now, the allied forces are ready to respond vigorously," Bush said.

Bush spoke to reporters at his wind-whipped, fog-shrouded mountaintop retreat where British Prime Minister John Major was his overnight guest.

Bush's statement was echoed in Saudi Arabia, where Defence Secretary Dick Cheney told marines they can expect to go to war soon after Jan. 15 if Iraq refuses to leave Kuwait.

"I would think that soon after Jan. 15th if (Iraq) has not withdrawn (its) forces from Kuwait

we'll be in a position to take military action in conjunction with our allies," Cheney said while standing atop an M60-A1 tank in the desert some 90 kilometres from the Kuwaiti border.

Major, who accompanied Bush to the news conference, left the clear impression that British policy as aligned with the U.S. stand as it was under former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

"If there is going to be a conflict in Kuwait, that's really a matter for Saddam Hussein," Major said. "He knows what the Security Council resolutions say."

Speaking later to reporters at Andrews Air Force Base before his departure, Major said he and Bush were "entirely of one mind" on the Gulf crisis. If Iraq refuses to withdraw, he said, "we are ready to use force to free Kuwait and restore the legitimate government."

As further evidence that all is well in the British-American connection in the post-Thatcher era, Bush and Major began addressing each other as "John"

and "George" shortly after their talks got under way on Friday.

Bush said the American and British positions are "totally together." Under questioning, Bush also said the Soviet Union has given "every indication" that its support for U.S. policies in the Gulf will continue despite the resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Shortly after Waller made his remarks last Wednesday about the lack of military preparedness in the Gulf, the administration began looking for ways to soften their impact.

Presidential spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Waller really meant that the forces were not as ready as they would like to be "for all contingencies."

Secretary of State James Baker suggested Waller's remarks were aimed at keeping the Iraqis guessing.

President Saddam said Friday that when 5,000 American soldiers die in a Gulf war Bush will be forced to quit.

"Why do Europeans... believe the Americans will defeat the

(Continued on page 5)

King meets Turkish delegation

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein conferred Saturday with a visiting Turkish parliamentary delegation led by Erdal Inonu, leader of the Social Democratic Populist Party, on developments in the Gulf crisis and current efforts to achieve a political settlement of the conflict.

King Hussein reaffirmed Jordan's strong ties with Turkey and the need for further bolstering of bilateral cooperation.

Inonu underlined the importance of continued efforts by King Hussein to pave the ground for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis and other issues in the Middle East, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

His Royal Highness Crown



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday confers with Turkish opposition leader Erdal Inonu

Prince Hassan, who later met with Inonu, attended part of the meeting along with the Turkish delegation and Turkey's ambassador to Jordan.

The Prince and Inonu reviewed developments in the Gulf

and prospects for a solution based on international legitimacy.

The Turkish delegation was also received by Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, who briefed it on Jordan's stand on the crisis.

The delegation was also received by Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyyat. Both meetings were attended by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Baqi Gammo.

UNRWA to monitor Israeli measures

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar plans to use relief officials and member nations' consulates to monitor treatment of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories, according to diplomats.

In a closed-door Security Council meeting, Perez de Cuellar outlined his plans on implementing a controversial resolution passed Thursday that calls for the United Nations to monitor Palestinians' safety "on an urgent basis."

It also calls for the secretary-general to draw on staff already in the area.

According to the diplomats, he told council members he would ask Giorgio Giacomelli, the Vienna-based head of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), to request members of his 2,300-person staff to file reports on the situation.

In addition he said he wanted countries who had consulates in Jerusalem to assist in the monitoring process.

Israel's immediate reaction to his plans was not known but it has rejected any action taken by the Security Council in the past as an interference in its internal

affairs.

The United States has raised objections to altering the mandate of any of the U.N. operations in Israel or the occupied territories.

In addition to UNRWA, the U.N. Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) has 291 military observers monitoring some of Israel's ceasefire lines.

"American diplomats are not entirely happy but they were more worried about UNTSO getting involved that the relief agency," said one council source.

The secretary-general did not give a date for a planned visit by his aide, Jean-Claude Aime of Haiti. Israel has said it would let him visit.

The resolution also asked the secretary-general to explore the possibility of a meeting of all the countries who signed the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention to help secure Israel's compliance with provisions of that treaty.

The convention, an international treaty, governs the treatment of civilians in time of war and bans collective punishment and expulsions, measures that Israel, itself a signatory, has taken on the West Bank in response to resistance.

KGB chief reports subversion, sabotage

MOSCOW (Agencies) — The head of the KGB security police Saturday told parliament, debating new powers for President Mikhail Gorbachev to avert chaos, that the Soviet Union faced subversion and economic sabotage.

Vladimir Kryuchkov told the Congress of People's Deputies that foreign intelligence services were trying to derail the economy and exploit serious ethnic divisions which he said could tear the country apart.

"The (foreign) special services, together with foreign anti-Soviet centres, have worked out new forms and methods of their activities inside the Soviet Union," he told 2,000 deputies inside the Kremlin Palace of Congresses.

These activities, he said, focused on the country's "political situation, our defence and scientific potential and the size of our reserves of strategic resources, fuel, food and foreign currency."

The old-style tone of Kryuchkov's address to a parliament still reeling from the resignation this week of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze had until recently virtually disappeared from view under Gorbachev's perestroika reforms.

Shevardnadze's resignation was the subject of meetings and emotional debates for the last two days. But deputies on Saturday turned their attention to a proposed constitutional amendment and a proposed union treaty stating the conditions under which the republics would remain part of the nation.

Gorbachev has asked for direct presidential control over new executive bodies that would replace the current council of minister, or cabinet. He has said the new powers are necessary to hold the country together while he implements economic reform amidst widening corruption and black-marketeering.

Kryuchkov, in his speech, echoed Gorbachev's concerns and said the KGB needed more support and authority to combat economic sabotage. He said nationalists have assembled 26,000 armed fighters in the Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, Armenia and Georgia.

All 15 Soviet republics have declared sovereignty in some form from the Kremlin.

In saying the country should be prepared for bloodshed, Kryuchkov referred to ethnic violence this year in Moldavia, Georgia and Armenia and asked, "Isn't there bloodshed already?"

Boris Yeltsin, the widely popular reformist president of the Russian Federation, said he was unimpressed by Kryuchkov's speech, and said it broke no new ground.

"Yes, there is sabotage, yet there is corruption," he said. "We have heard all this before."

A representative of the separatist Lithuanian government, attending but not participating in the congress, accused Kryuchkov of using scare tactics that have failed before.

"If he is speaking about bloodshed, then it will be him who causes it," said Algis Cekulis.

Benjedid sees room for peaceful Gulf solution

PARIS (Agencies) — Algerian President Chadli Benjedid said Saturday that he believes there is still a chance to avert war in the Gulf.

"The chances of an Arab or even international solution to avoid war still exist," Benjedid said after meeting with French President Francois Mitterrand.

Earlier this week Benjedid finished a tour of several Middle East countries searching for a solution to the conflict brought on by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

He issued an appeal after meeting with Mitterrand "to all countries... to contribute together towards a peaceful solution instead of a war, the consequences of which would be catastrophic."

Benjedid and Mitterrand called on their respective foreign ministers, Sid Ahmad Ghazali and Roland Dumas, to work "in tight concert in the coming weeks" towards a peaceful resolution, said presidential spokesman Hubert Vedrine.

The United Nations has authorised the use of force after Jan. 15 if Iraq does not withdraw its troops from Kuwait.

Besides the Gulf crisis, the two leaders also discussed their relations with Syria and Lebanon, as well as Chad, where a coup late last month ousted former President Hissene Habre.

Benjedid is to visit Spain Sunday.

"It is the responsibility of all men of good will, not only in Arab or European countries... to contribute together to reinforce and help find a peaceful solution instead of heading to

wards an explosion in the area."

Benjedid said in Paris.

He arrived in Paris from Rome where his foreign minister said Iraq was willing to compromise to avert war in the Gulf, but would not accept a solution that sullied its honour.

Benjedid gave no details of his more than three-hour meeting with Mitterrand but told reporters that war in the Gulf "would be a catastrophe, not only for countries in the region but also internationally."

Benjedid was quoted as telling Italian leaders Friday that Iraq would be willing to make concessions on Kuwait as long as it received guarantees it would not be attacked after any withdrawal.

Italian Premier Giulio Andreotti said Saturday he doesn't rule out negotiated border changes between Iraq and Kuwait but that Iraq must first withdraw all its troops.

Replying to questions at his year-end news conference, Andreotti affirmed that Italy and its European Community (EC) partners would not accept a partial evacuation as a gesture of goodwill by Iraq.

However, he added that borders — as provided in the Helsinki agreement for Europe — can be altered by negotiations.

"But first, there must be respect for the United Nations position which provides for total withdrawal. It (Kuwait) cannot be liberated partially," he said.

Andreotti, who met with Benjedid on Friday, said he still

(Continued on page 5)

Main rightist groups refuse to join Karami

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's main Christian groups said Saturday they would not join a proposed national unity government charged with ending 15 years of civil war if the majority of its members were pro-Syrian.

The step threatened to torpedo efforts by newly-appointed Prime Minister Omar Karami to bring the rival heads of the militias that tore Lebanon apart into a reconciliation cabinet.

Under an Arab-brokered and internationally-backed peace plan for Lebanon, a new cabinet is supposed to disband by March all of the country's private armies and establish strong relations with Syria, which has some 40,000 troops in Lebanon.

"If a national reconciliation government is not formed by the end of this year then the country will be facing a real problem... a government crisis will be a setback in the peace march of the country," a senior government official said.

The 10,000-strong Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) militia said it would not take part in an enlarged government headed by Karami, who was appointed on Thursday.

Political sources said Karami was planned to form a 30-member cabinet that would in-

clude the warlords of Christian and Muslim militias as well as parliamentarians and other leaders.

"The Christians should themselves nominate their own representatives... an imbalance in the government will carry the seeds of another explosion," said a spokesman for the hardline LF group, a longtime opponent of Syrian influence in Lebanon.

The LF said such a cabinet would be dominated by pro-Syrian factions including its Christian rivals.

George Saadeh, the leader of the right-wing Falange Party, said his faction would not join a broadened government.

"We will not be confronted by a de facto government," said Saadeh.

The pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) said earlier this week it would not take part in the cabinet because "it does not address the essence of the problem in the country."

"The Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), led by Walid Junblatt, has said such a cabinet would be 'unbity'."

Thousands of troops took over militia-run areas of Beirut earlier this month and united a divided capital for the first time since 1975.

مكتبة محمد الجليل

Fahd rejects talk of oil wealth, says Saudis needy

RIYADH (AP) — King Fahd was quoted Saturday as rejecting charges that the oil-rich Arab countries need to spread more of their wealth beyond their borders.

The Saudi monarch said he wondered why such calls to redistribute wealth were not heard from the richer countries some decades ago when Saudi Arabia was a nation of paupers.

He also said that Saudi Arabia, even though the world's largest oil-exporting nation, still needed to amass petroleum revenue for 15 to 20 years more to complete massive development projects started when the oil wealth surfaced.

"It is nothing new for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to hear the words 'distribution of wealth' behind which are many objectives but certainly none to benefit the Muslim," said Fahd in statements made while on a tour Friday of the holy city of Medina. The official Saudi Press Agency carried the statements overnight.

"But we wish to direct one question. Where were these making the call the days when these lands had no livelihood? Where were they when our fathers and forefathers were dying of hunger, those finding a date or some milk feeling they owned the world?" the king went on.

"Where is that world which today says the wealth must be distributed and where was that world when our lands were desert and bare trees?"

Fahd did not name any country or leader involved in the charges but appeared to have at least Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in mind. "Many who are spreading that talk nowadays are those who were rich from old times, why then did they not note our conditions and say we have brothers on the peninsula in the desert who have nothing but trees and stones on which to survive?"

Iraq, home of one of the world's oldest civilisations in

Mesopotamia, is located at the northern tip of the Arabian Peninsula.

Among the reasons precipitating Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait were its demand for funds from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to help rehabilitate the Iraqi economy after the battering it received in the war with Iran.

Fahd said that when oil was struck in Saudi Arabia, the wealth did not go waste: "It was spent on the homeland and the Saudi citizen to bring him to a good standard and we still need longer time and more funds."

The country was vast and "no one can say we have fulfilled our duty completely. We need tremendous amounts to complete over 10 or 15... or 20... years what remains in terms of roads, electricity, telephones, universities, schools and other aspects of life."

Added Fahd: "How can someone then say the kingdom has wealth which it does not know how to spend... those who want to come and see for themselves whether we are in need or not are welcome, and we affirm to them that we are needy."

He also stressed that Saudi Arabia has "fulfilled its duty" to Arab and Islamic countries in Asia and Africa but will not say how much until forced to do so. He estimated the world's Islamic population at present at 1.3 billion, 300,000 more than the commonly cited figure.

Oil wealth, the king further noted, was subject to ups and downs depending on prices.

He also said it was not correct to say the kingdom was reaping price of \$35-\$40 per barrel for the oil it has been selling since the Gulf crisis erupted and brought a shortfall of one million barrels per day of Kuwait and Iraqi crude oil to the market.

"The kingdom's sale of light crude oil at record level sold for \$26, and the heavier is as low as \$15" a barrel, he said. The \$40 figure, attained during the first two months of the crisis, was for

the actively traded U.S. and North Sea crude oils.

Saudi Arabia is making huge oil profits from the Gulf crisis and should pay the full cost of the U.S. military operation there, two U.S. senators said.

"Saudi Arabia is reaping a windfall profit of \$52 billion on an annual basis because of the oil price increase since early August. The Saudis easily can afford to pay the full cost for our defense of their territory," Senator Larry Pressler, a South Dakota Republican, said at a news conference with Alfonse D'Amato, a New York Republican.

"While the U.S. is protecting Saudi Arabia, the Saudis are fattening their own pocket-books," D'Amato said. "If not for the United States, Saudi Arabia would have become the 20th province of Iraq."

D'Amato and Pressler said they would introduce a Senate resolution calling on President George Bush to seek full payment from Saudi Arabia when Congress reconvenes on Jan. 3. A similar resolution will be introduced in the House of Representatives.

They said Bush and other U.S. officials had been timid in seeking more support from Saudi Arabia.

The senators said the cost of the U.S. military operation, known as Operation Desert Shield, was estimated at \$30 billion over a full year. They said Saudi Arabia had contributed about \$1 billion so far to the U.S. effort.

The United States has sent about 280,000 troops to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region, along with ships, aircraft, tanks and other equipment and plans to increase its force to about 430,000.

D'Amato gave a letter seeking more support from Saudi Arabia to Saudi Ambassador Bandar Ben Sultan Thursday. He said Bandar understood the senators' position but could not make any commitments.

300 face charges in Morocco riots

RABAT (R) — More than 300 people have been charged in four Moroccan cities for their part in riots a week ago and most of them will stand trial next week, defence lawyers said Saturday.

A group of 39 were jailed Friday for between three and five months each by a court in the northern town of Tangier. Three people were acquitted.

The trial of another group of 41 was adjourned until Monday. They are charged with staging an illegal demonstration, disobedience and breach of the peace in the Beni Makada slum suburb of Tangier Dec. 14.

Similar charges have been brought against groups of 66 in Kenitra, 34 in Rabat, and two groups of 52 and 70 each in Fez. All are due to stand trial next week.

Officials have denied a French radio report that people detained in Fez were beaten or tortured.

The accused are being defended by dozens of lawyers retained by opposition parties, the bar and jurists associations, and three human rights groups. The authorities have not published any list of casualties in Tangier.

An official statement said five people were killed and 127 were injured last weekend in the central Moroccan city of Fez where the worst riots occurred.

Opposition sources have said between 10 and 15 people died in clashes between demonstrators and police in Tangier.

Egyptian court begins trial of Sinai killings

SUEZ, Egypt (AP) — A three-officer military court Saturday gave lawyers an extra week to prepare a defence for a police conscript charged with killings four Israelis in a shooting rampage across Egypt's Sinai border with the Jewish state.

Mohammad Wagdi Al Leithy, the court's president, ordered Ayman Mohammad Hassan, 22, held without bail until the proceedings resume next Saturday. Hassan appeared relaxed and cheerful as his court-martial began Saturday, standing in the defendant's cage flanked by two military policemen.

During a recess, military policemen kissed him on the cheeks and gave him cigarettes and tea. One, armed with an automatic rifle and standing a post behind the judges' table, shouted to colleagues at the cage to give Hassan his best regards.

Hassan is being tried at 3rd army headquarters, 16 kilometres west of Suez. The city is at the southern end of the Suez Canal 135 kilometres east of Cairo.

After charges were read, including four counts of premeditated murder for the Nov. 25 shootings in which 27 Israelis were wounded, the judges agreed to the postponement request from defence attorneys. They argued they had had insufficient time to study documents of the case.

Brigadier Al Leithy rejected a defence request for bail.

Hassan, guarded by two military policemen, appeared relaxed and cheerful as he stood in the defendant's cage. He occasionally smiled or laughed as he chat-

ted with his lawyers.

But his mother was in tears as she walked to the cage and spoke with him. Other family members at the public hearing included his father and brother.

The shooting occurred on Nov. 25. Israeli officials said a lone man wearing an Egyptian uniform sneaked into Israel and advanced about 300 metres to a point close to a desert highway. He lay in ambush until a bus and three military vehicles rolled by, when the man opened up with an automatic rifle. Four Israelis died and 27 were wounded.

The Israelis said one of the ambushed men shot at the attacker as he fled back into Egypt, a bullet striking him in the head.

Egyptian authorities then announced the arrest of Hassan, a plumber whose three-year conscription was due to end next July. They said Hassan had a minor head injury.

Cairo newspapers have reported that Hassan confessed to investigators that he had shot up the Israeli vehicles. He asserted he had acted alone, the reports said.

It was the second attack on Israelis by Egyptian policemen guarding the Sinai border since the two countries signed a treaty in 1979.

In 1985, Suleiman Khater fatally shot seven Israelis. A military court in Suez sentenced him to life imprisonment at hard labour. Shortly afterwards, authorities said Khater hanged himself in a Cairo prison cell.

Under the treaty, only police can be stationed on Egyptian territory adjacent to the frontier.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraqi children form peace camp

BAGHDAD (R) — Hundreds of Iraqi children set up a "peace camp" opposite the U.S. embassy in Baghdad on Saturday to denounce trade sanctions they said were depriving them of milk and medicine. Six-year-old Sally Zuhair delivered a speech in English to embassy staff saying a U.N. trade embargo had prevented thousands of children getting milk or medicine. The children, representing hundreds of schools, set up makeshift tents and waved placards and flags. The trade embargo, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, excludes items such as food and drugs but Iraq says it has caused shortages, especially of baby food, which have killed more than 2,000 children.

Indian leader pleads for Gulf talks

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar said Saturday a war in the Gulf would be disastrous and should be averted by negotiations. He criticised Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for his attitude to talks offered by the United States. "President Saddam Hussein should have responded more favourably to the initiative by President (George) Bush for a negotiated settlement of the problem," Shekhar told a news conference. Baghdad has said it wants talks offered by Washington to take place on Jan. 12 just three days before a deadline set by the United Nations for a complete Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Washington wants the talks to take place well before the deadline. "War will be a disaster," Shekhar said. The threat of war between Iraq and U.S.-led forces in the Gulf now appeared "quite serious," he said. India has been hurt economically by the Gulf crisis, losing hundreds of millions of dollars in trade and in money sent home by workers in Iraq and Kuwait.

Bonn: No troops to Gulf

BONN (R) — A newspaper report Saturday that 15,000 German soldiers will be sent to the Gulf after Christmas was dismissed as nonsense by the Defence Ministry. "It is complete rubbish," a ministry spokesman said. Berlin's Junge Welt, once the newspaper of the East German communist youth movement, quoted officers from the Bundeswehr Ost — the army wing formed from the old East German army — as saying 3,000 of the men would come from the east. The report, quoted by the German ADN news agency, said Bonn would send the troops soon after Christmas after pressure from the United States. The German constitution forbids sending troops outside the NATO area but Chancellor Helmut Kohl has said he would like to change this.

Iranians celebrate winter solstice

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranians celebrate the winter solstice in traditional style, Tehran Television reported. The broadcast showed hordes of shoppers buying watermelons and dried fruits, traditional foods eaten on the longest night of the winter. "We haven't planned anything special, but of course we have bought some watermelons and dried fruit to eat together with the family," a middle-aged woman told the television reporter. A moustachioed gentleman said, "We will sit together with family elders, talk a little, laugh a little and eat a little into the wee hours of the night." According to ancient Iranian custom, families gather together and stay up the whole night, often toasting their feet and legs under a very large blanket thrown over a coal heater called a "korsi." Family members each open a page at random from the poems of Hafiz, and ancient poet who is considered an oracle. Each poem is read aloud, and then interpreted by a family elder. The winter solstice falls on Dec. 21 or 22 in the northern Hemisphere, the time when the sun is farthest south of the equator.

U.S. envoy meets Aoun

BEIRUT (R) — U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Rajan Crocker has met ousted rebel General Michel Aoun at the French embassy where he lives as a refugee, government sources said Saturday. It was the first known meeting between Aoun and foreign or Lebanese officials since his ouster by Syrian troops on Oct. 13. The sources said the meeting took place this week. Crocker presented his credentials to President Elias Hrawi last month, more than a year after U.S. diplomats were evacuated by helicopters and the embassy closed following protests by Aoun's supporters. Aoun had attacked Washington for not backing him in an unsuccessful six-month "war of liberation" he waged in 1989 to expel Syria's 40,000 troops. Aoun, appointed in 1983 by former President Amin Gemayel as head of a military interim government, refused to recognise Hrawi and an Arab-backed peace pact for Lebanon. Hrawi's government has asked Paris to hand over the general for trial as a war criminal but France insists on granting him asylum.

Tremor hits Iranian town

NICOSIA (R) — A tremor Saturday shook the Caspian town of Roudbar, devastated by Iran's worst recorded earthquake which killed 35,000 people in June. The national news agency IRNA said panic-stricken residents rushed into the streets after the latest tremor. "No report is yet available on the intensity of the quake, probable casualties or material damage," IRNA said in a report monitored in Nicosia. On Dec. 17, a powerful earthquake rocked the coastal province of Bushehr in southern Iran, injuring at least 25 people.

Algerian lawyers resume work

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian lawyers went back to work Saturday after a one-week strike to protest at what they called a parliamentary threat to their professional rights. Members of parliamentary threat have proposed amendments to a bill regulating the legal profession. The lawyers say the changes challenge the immunity of their offices. The head of the bar association, Ahmad Abeche, said talks would continue to win over the members of parliament. He said the strike was suspended, rather than called off.

Aspin advocates sanctions with 'credible threat' against Iraq

WASHINGTON (USIA) — "Relying on sanctions is not the answer" to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, says U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin. He believes the best chance for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis is a diplomatic effort backed up by "the credible threat" of military force.

During a speech at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) here Friday, Aspin noted that while the sanctions "are working superbly... to an unprecedented degree," the question of whether they can work politically "is more problematical."

Aspin, whose committee recently held a series of hearings dealing with the Gulf crisis, said the international unity required to maintain the sanctions is likely to fracture before the embargo is able to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

"Keeping up the requisite political, military and psychological pressure is a major stumbling block," he said. "Can we keep the alliance together and focused — especially focused — long enough for the sanctions to work politically? I judge the probability of that to be very low," Aspin said.

The lawmaker added that

although the sanctions are seriously affecting the Iraqi civilian population, their continuation will not necessarily translate into action on the part of Baghdad. "Pain to the Iraqi people is not the same thing as pain to Saddam Hussein," he said.

Regarding President Bush's decision to initiate high-level contacts with Iraq, Aspin said the announcement "raised the possibility of a diplomatic solution to the crisis." He added that negotiations could focus on issues beyond Iraqi compliance with the resolutions passed by the United Nations.

Aspin suggested that the United States "might... agree to a peace conference to discuss the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian issue. Or we might agree, as we already have, to negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait about the border after an Iraqi withdrawal."

"Some will not be happy with this conclusion," he said, "but I believe the test of a diplomatic solution is the extent of the compliance with the U.N. resolutions. A complete withdrawal by Saddam Hussein from Kuwait will be a victory, almost regardless of what else is agreed upon around the edges. A partial withdrawal, of course, is only a partial victory."

Aspin stressed that the "diplomatic option" would have to be supplemented with measures such as stricter controls on nuclear technology, an embargo on certain military items and "a continued multinational armed force in Kuwait."

Aspin also made clear that he was not advocating "linkage" of the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, during the question-and-answer period immediately following his speech, Aspin rejected the suggestion made by Iraqi Ambassador Mohamed Al Mashat, that Washington ought to push for a U.N. resolution "protecting the Palestinians."

Aspin noted that both Saddam and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat have tried to link the two issues, but added that there is "no chance" of Washington's doing so.

He told the Iraqi ambassador, who was present at the CSIS forum, that after resolution of the current crisis, "then clearly we ought to try and deal with the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian crisis. So, if you are concerned about getting that moving, I would suggest that if you pull out of Kuwait, we can get started on it a lot sooner."

Sisco and Ball differ over best approach to Gulf crisis

WASHINGTON (USIS) — Joe Sisco, a former U.S. undersecretary of state, believes the key to dealing with the crisis is the real threat of military retaliation.

He expressed his views during testimony Friday before the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee. The panel also heard from former Under Secretary of State and Ambassador to the United Nations George Ball, and former State Department counselor Helmut Sonnenfeldt.

Sisco dismissed the proposition that a successful sanctions policy alone can force Iraq to withdraw and restore the legitimate government of Kuwait.

"Proponents of sanctions," he said, "don't make the connection between the effect of the sanctions and the political decision of Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait."

According to Sisco, "what is involved here is the survival of Saddam Hussein... (and) I don't think the sanctions will convince him" to comply with the United Nations resolutions passed in the wake of the invasion. "I think he'll only move... when the pistol is at his temple... is cocked, and he feels a little pressure on the temple."

He pointed out that one difficulty associated with relying solely on sanctions is that they might not affect desired areas. Most of the burden of the sanctions is expected to fall on the Iraqi people rather than on the military, and "there is no feasible way in which the added sacrifices of the people of Iraq... can be translated into action internally against Saddam Hussein," Sisco argued.

Sisco seemed reasonably opti-

mistic about the prospects for a diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis but stressed that "if diplomacy achieves a satisfactory result," it will have been because "force has been marshalled overwhelmingly, with both defensive and offensive capacity."

Since such an outcome would not diminish Iraq's military capacity, Sisco said there would be a need for some kind of continued U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia, a U.N. presence in Kuwait, an on-going naval flotilla in the Gulf, and continued restrictions on transfers of arms and technology.

The former official offered strong words of support for the administration's current policy, calling it "a classic example and orchestration of sanctions, military force, and diplomacy, not as alternatives, but as complementary and mutually supporting within the framework of an unprecedented international coalition."

In sharp contrast, George Ball told the House panel that the additional troop deployment announced in early November by President Bush had "effectively deprived us of the chance to test the efficacy of economic sanctions."

Ball said the deployment — which is expected to double the number of U.S. troops in the Gulf region — reflects "a reversal in the president's earlier thinking," and "illustrates more than ever the administration's mistake in not at the outset creating a true United Nations flag as we had done in the Korean War."

He suggested that recent changes in administration policy had heightened the possibility of

war in the near future, with disastrous effects. "To attack early in 1991 would, in tactical terms, be premature, it would toss away the advantage that the enemy was being progressively weakened through the erosion of sanctions," Ball said.

Maintaining the sanctions would steadily erode Iraq's military readiness — both in terms of equipment and morale. "From a strictly military point of view," he asked, "would it not be easier to attack an enemy with its strength depleted by months of sanctions than one at the height of its powers?"

He added that recent statements made by President Bush have severely restricted openings for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Ball told the committee: "In order to make sure that no bargaining door is opened even the slightest crack, the president has rejected diplomacy and effectively ruled out any solution short of capitulation. There is, he maintains, nothing to negotiate between the United States and Iraq."

Taking issue with Ball's testimony, Helmut Sonnenfeldt said the administration should not be read "as having dismissed the role of diplomacy," in the crisis. He pointed out that Washington undertook a major deployment of forces in the southeastern part of the United States during the Cuban missile crisis, and had threatened retaliation against the Soviets after Moscow threatened to attack Britain and France during the crisis over the Suez Canal.

"The fact of the matter," Sonnenfeldt said, "is that we know very little about what sanctions can do."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE	
15:00	Teletext
15:30	Koran
15:45	Programme review
15:50	Children programme
16:10	Football
16:30	News summary
16:40	Local programme
16:50	Programme review
17:00	News in Arabic
17:10	Arabic series
17:30	Programme review
17:45	Local programme
18:00	News summary in Arabic
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Christmas film for children
18:00	News in French
18:15	Classical music
18:30	News in Hebrew
18:45	Variety programme
19:00	News in Arabic
19:30	Open House
20:00	Doc: Great Journeys
20:30	News in English
21:00	The Magistrate

PRAYER TIMES

05:05	Fair
05:37	(Sunrise) Dhah
11:35	Dhuhr
14:19	'Asr
16:41	Maghreb
18:04	'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetfeth.	Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church.	Tel. 637878
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624900.	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terraviva Church Tel. 623366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383.	
625453	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.	771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.	771331
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.	
Armenian International Church Tel.	685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-	
Day Saints Tel. 815817 and 654932.	

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Clouds will increase gradually and temperatures will drop, while rain is expected to fall in most parts of the Kingdom. Winds will be westerly fresh. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy

and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be westerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman	Min-max temp: 5-22
Aqaba	10-20
Deserts	4-14
Jordan Valley	11-28

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 14, Aqaba 22. Humidity readings: Amman 90 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent

USEFUL NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Salman Al Daboub	776751
Dr. Ruz Abu Zem	(—)
Dr. Ahmad Al Daqn	676473
Dr. Nabil Al Muhtaseb	802522
First pharmacy	622730
Fendous pharmacy	779536
Al Asma pharmacy	637025
Naroukh pharmacy	626722
Al Salam pharmacy	630730
Yacoub pharmacy	644045
Shmoun pharmacy	637660

IRABD:

Dr. Mahmoud Saeed	(—)
Al Shura pharmacy	(985238)

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halasa	(—)
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	641111
Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	811228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	63521
Hotel Complaints	607800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	874767
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	767111
Telephone Information	
(Directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	

Repairs

Abdali Telephone Repairs	623101
Abdali Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	661100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815161
Electric Power	
Flight Information	636381
University Hospital	845845
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS

The Islamic, Abdali	66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali	6641714
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	7721013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	77511126
Army, Marka	84161115
Queen Alia Hospital	60224050
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	091987733

Jordan, India to boost trade

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will purchase Indian goods worth \$60 million annually in exchange for an increase in India's imports of Jordanian fertilisers, phosphate and potash, according to an agreement reached between the two sides during a visit to New Delhi by a Jordanian economic delegation.

Delegation leader Ibrahim Badran said, in a statement upon returning here Saturday at the end of the week-long visit and talks on promoting bilateral cooperation in trade and economic fields, that talks were focused on promoting bilateral cooperation in trade and economic fields.

"India will sell Jordan agricultural and industrial products and will offer contracting services to the Kingdom at international competitive prices, and has agreed to cooperate with Jordan to organise trade exhibitions for promoting the sale of national Jordanian and Indian products in New Delhi and Amman," Badran said in his statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He said that in return India would increase its imports of Jordanian phosphate from 1.5 million tonnes to 1.8 million tonnes annually, would buy 500,000 tonnes of potash and would increase its imports of Jordanian fertilisers from 350,000 to 450,000 tonnes annually.

The two sides reviewed areas where they could launch joint

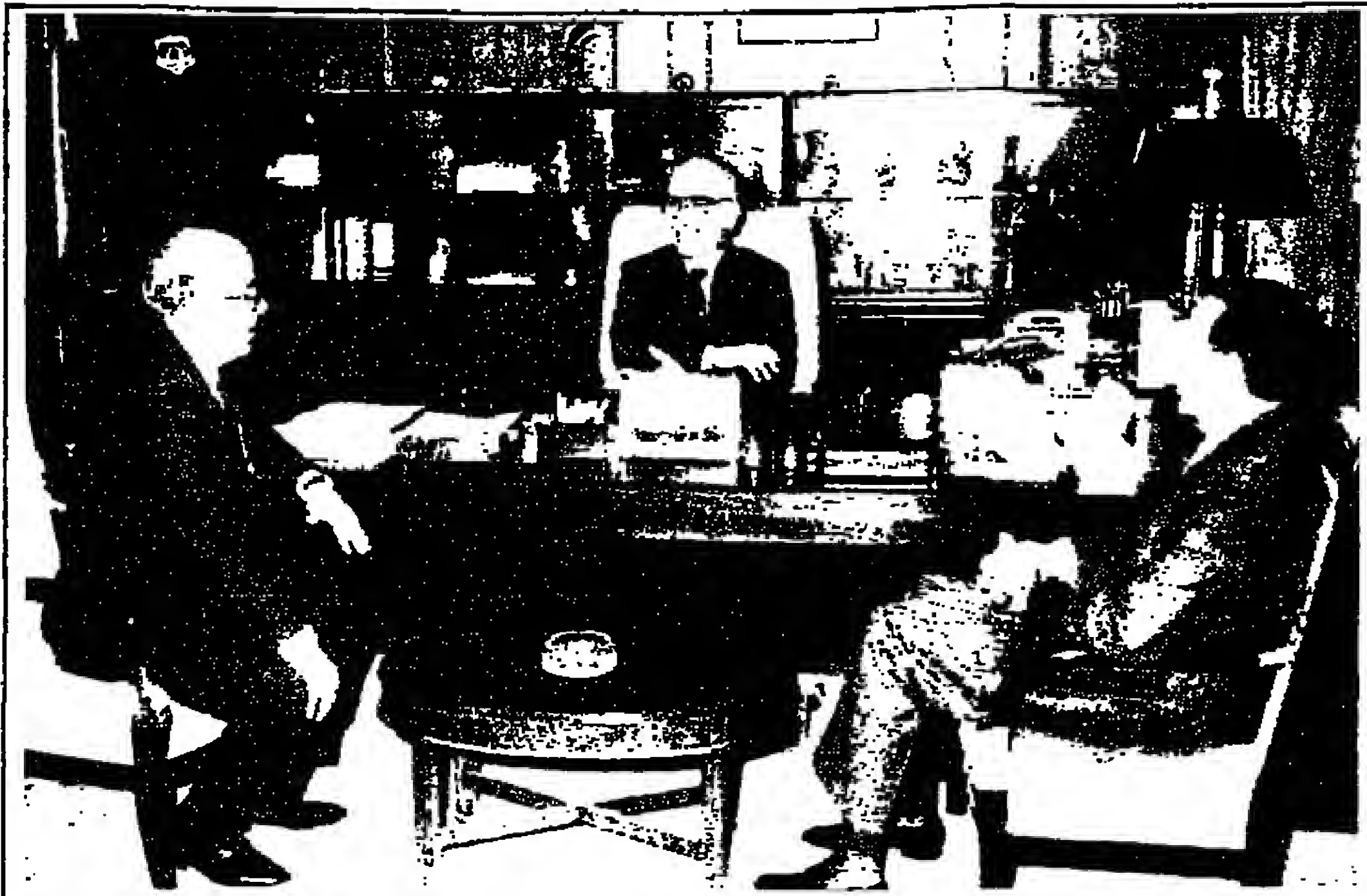
ventures employing Jordanian raw materials and Indian expertise and markets, Badran, who is also Ministry of Industry and Trade's secretary-general, said.

He said that the two sides had agreed to follow up the implementation of a joint Jordanian-Indian project for the production of phosphate-based phosphoric acid at the rate of nearly 200,000 tonnes annually.

He said that the Indian government had given its consent to set up the project in conjunction with Jordan and also agreed to purchase the acid produced at the project's site near the Shidiyah phosphate mine in southern Jordan.

He said that the two sides would formally sign documents for the implementation of the project in February 1991. The two sides, he added, reviewed India's small- and medium-sized industries, and agreed that India should provide expertise to Jordan in these fields with the aim of encouraging local investors to set up national Jordanian industries that would conform to the country's needs under the present circumstances.

Badran said that the two sides had also agreed to stimulate tourism and to sign a protocol on tourism at a later date. India, he added, has agreed to provide Jordan with expertise concerning education and vocational training related to the tourism industry.



KING VISITS PRIME MINISTER: His Majesty King Hussein Saturday visited the Prime Minister where he met with Prime Minister Mudar Badran in the presence of Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker. King Hussein was briefed on the economic and financial situation in the Kingdom. His Majesty asked the government to look for new markets for the various Jordanian products and gave directives on several issues of interest to the country and its citizens. The King also visited the Armed Forces General Command where he was received by Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb, his assistants, the commander of the Royal Air Force and the inspector general. The King held a meeting with Abu Taleb and discussed with him issues of interest to the Armed Forces. The meeting was attended by Ben Shaker.

Education budget accounts for 8 per cent of total fiscal budget

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Education's annual budget accounts for nearly eight per cent of the total fiscal budget for the country, and it spends nearly six per cent of the Kingdom's gross national product on education at various levels, according to Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Hamdan.

Jordan along with other developing nations of the world, has witnessed an increase of nearly 75 per cent expenditures on education compared with the advanced nations whose increase of education was estimated at 50 per cent, the minister said in an address to the opening session of a symposium on "educational wastage and economics of education" which is being organised here by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Jordan.

The symposium, attended by 25 participants representing various institutions and the Ministry of Education, would be reviewing working papers dealing with the subject of education economics which is being discussed for the first time in Jordan.

The two-day symposium will also deal with the present educational system in Jordan, wastage

of effort in education, expenditure on education in schools and options for education investments.

The minister told the meeting that the second half of the present century had witnessed increasing concern over the universalisation of basic education, but the last part of the 20th century necessitates rationalisation in expenditure which means examining ways to minimise wastage specially in view of the present economic recession.

"The resolutions of the Thailand conference on 'Education for All' held in March 1990 called for improving the quality of education and ensuring basic education for all children by the year 2000, and this calls for reducing spending in line with the available resources," Hamdan added. He said that the present symposium was expected to serve the goals set by the 1987 educational conference held in Jordan which called for creating a balance between available resources and population in the new educational system.

UNESCO Director in Jordan Mohammad Kazem told the opening session that the Arab World was in real need for careful

planning of educational economics.

Arab countries spend an average of 6.6 per cent of the gross national product on education, but this rate rises in some countries like Algeria, Morocco, Yemen and Libya to 25 per cent. Kasem, who underlined the importance of investment in education, said that a 60 per cent increase in gross national product in the United States proved to be due to an increase in investments in education.

In the Arab World, Kazem said, the number of students will rise to 74 million by the year 2000 compared to 45 million in 1988. He cited a UNESCO study in the early 1970s which said that the Arab schools witness student drop out of 40 per cent in the primary stage, compared to 33 per cent in 1990.

A ministry official said in a statement that studies were being conducted on the cost of teaching an individual student at the compulsory and secondary stages as well as students at the vocational training centres operated by the Ministry of Education. Vocational training, he added, will be among the topics to be reviewed by the working papers at the present symposium.

Seminar held on handicap detection

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Institute for Child Health and Development Sunday opens, a two-day seminar on the prevention and early detection of handicaps in preschool children.

The seminar aims to inform professionals in the health field and people working in the area of mother and child care, about the nature of the work at the institute, and new advances in the field of the prevention and early detection of handicaps in preschool children.

The Institute for Child Health and Development is a joint Jordanian-Swedish project being implemented by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Swedish Save the Children (Radda Barnen).

This seminar is the first in a

series that aims at increasing the awareness of professionals involved in mother and child care services about the early signs of problems in children's central nervous systems.

The seminar will include presentations on early screening of problems that could affect fetal development, and detection of cerebral palsy in children in their first year, as well as precautions to take in order to avoid diseases that may lead to the damaging of the central nervous system.

Attending the seminar will be representatives from the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, UNRWA, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, King Hussein Medical City, and the Institute for Child Health and Development (CHD).

Khreisat takes over Sawt Al Shaab

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily will have a new chief editor to succeed Sultan Al Hattab who now works for Al Ra'i Arabic daily as a columnist.

The new chief editor of Sawt Al Shaab is Hashem Khreisat, president of the Jordan Press Association and director of the editorial staff at Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

Khreisat, elected Jordan Press Association president in March 1988, is expected to take up his new post by January 1, 1990, according to a decision taken by the Sawt Al Shaab board of directors.

Khreisat has worked for Al Ra'i Arabic daily for the past 18 years before accepting the new post after months of pressure.



Hashem Khreisat

JORDAN TIMES
Tel: 667171

Enforcers tighten Red Sea blockade

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Amid reports that the Jordanian government and American authorities were trying to work out a formula to ease the U.S.-led naval blockade in the Red Sea, the enforcers of the siege appear to have stepped up inspection and interception of vessels headed for Aqaba.

The latest interception was of a freighter carrying 255 containers bound for Aqaba on Thursday, shipping sources said.

The Red Sea Europe was boarded by officers of a Spanish warship who decided to select three containers for a random check, said the sources.

"But the chosen containers happened to be located in the lower hold of the vessel, thus virtually making it impossible to have them up for inspection in the high seas," said one of the sources.

"Subsequently, the ship returned to Port Suez and is now unloading quite a good number of containers so as to make the three accessible for inspection," added the source.

According to the source, one of the containers is carrying used clothes, while the second one contains loose general cargo for several Jordanian importers and the third is loaded with harmless chemicals. The ship is scheduled to arrive outside the Gulf of Aqaba late Saturday, according to the vessel's agents.

"The entire process of inspection has taken a bizarre turn," said a Jordanian importer. "We were hoping that there would be a change in the situation after the visit to Amman of the U.S. assistant defence secretary and assurances that the blockade would be eased, but it now appears that the siege is being tightened."

The American official, Henry Rowens, was in Amman earlier this month and one of the key themes for his discussions here was the situation at Aqaba. It was reported that he had assured Jordanian businessmen that the blockade applied only to Iraq-bound cargo and goods destined for Iraq, and not to other goods.

A senior American source said Rowens was "very impressed" by the views expressed by Jordanian businessmen during a meeting with him. "But bureaucracy takes its course," said the official referring to Jordanian complaints over the interception of ships and subse-

quent difficulties posed by the naval blockade in the Red Sea.

Other American sources argue that the naval fleet in the Red Sea is under the control of the Defence Department and the State Department had only limited control of its movements.

"Both departments are doing their job and there is no concerted campaign to choke off Jordanian imports," said a source.

But the argument is easily rejected by Jordanian businessmen.

"The interceptions have been going on for too long for the Defence Department or any other American authority not to realise that the embargo is hurting Jordan more than Iraq," said a prominent importer.

"As far as one could see, the ulterior motive is to pressure Jordan in every form and manner possible, and no one is going to accept this nonsense about lack of coordination between the various American authorities," he added.

The embargo was ordered by the U.N. Security Council in early August, a few days after the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, in a bid to pressure Iraq into withdrawing its forces from the emirate.

But caught in the middle are Jordanian importers who face the prospect of protracted delays in shipments as a result of ships staying away from Aqaba, higher transport costs involved in getting diverted shipments from other ports in the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, and higher insurance costs.

According to informed sources, Jordan and the U.S. were trying to figure out a way to ensure that Jordan-bound goods were not intercepted by the enforcers of the embargo. This process involves prior notification to the American navy of details of goods coming to Jordan such as the importers' name or the purpose for which the goods would be used.

"More than anything else, the Americans are seeking individual Jordanian government guarantees for each consignment, which would not be required in Iraq or used in any industry that would cater to the Iraqis," said a source.

"The Americans have compiled a list of Jordanian importers who have been doing business with Iraq (prior to the imposition of the trade sanctions)," said the source.

"The American warships in the Red Sea have a copy of this list, and every consignment destined for any of the importers included in the list automatically becomes suspect and intercepted," the source told the Jordan Times, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Shipping sources and clearing agents confirmed this account.

Meanwhile, a Sudanese vessel carrying vehicles of evacuees from Kuwait was still awaiting clearance to proceed, 10 days after it was intercepted by American warships in the Red Sea on its way to Port Sudan from Aqaba.

"I do not know why the vessel is not allowed to proceed," said the Sudanese ambassador to Jordan, Abdullah Mohammad Jabara.

"Our Foreign Ministry had talked to the American Embassy in Khartoum and the ambassador had agreed that the ship will be allowed to sail," he told the Jordan Times.

Samir Ardekhan, general manager of T. Gargour and Fils, agents of the Cyprus-registered but Sudanese-owned Dongola, said the company was not involved in the moves to clear the vessel's cargo.

"It is an issue between the Sudanese government and the Americans," Ardekhan said.

The dispute revolves around contentions by the enforcers of the embargo that some of the vehicles aboard the Dongola were shipped out of Aqaba "for money" — implying that they could have been stolen from Kuwait after Iraq invaded and occupied the emirate.

According to Ardekhan, "the ownership of each and every vehicle aboard the Dongola was established through proper documents and procedures before they were loaded from Aqaba."

Shipping officials said at least 30 vehicles aboard the ship did not have proper keys and some others were loaded onto trucks and trailers.

Ardekhan said the absence of keys in some cases where the owners had flown to Khartoum ahead of the vessel, and weak batteries in other cases, had forced the agents to load them after either hotwiring them or transported them by other bigger vehicles.

The Dongola was intercepted by American warships as it sailed out of the Gulf of Aqaba on Dec. 13.

Another vessel, bound for Hodeida, Yemen, carrying some 70 vehicles of Yemeni evacuees from Kuwait, was also intercepted on the same day but allowed to proceed after its agents provided "clarifications and explanations" over the ownership of the cargo.

"We have shipped thousands of vehicles of evacuees through Aqaba, and this is the first time that they (American warships) have blocked a ship carrying them," Ardekhan said.

No American official was available for comment on the issue.

University of Jordan, RSS to cooperate in science, technology

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the University of Jordan Saturday signed an agreement, paving the ground for cooperation in scientific and technological fields and promoting bilateral coordination in studies concerning water supplies, the environment, pollution of air, soil and water as well as the environment.

According to the agreement, post-graduate students at the University of Jordan will be enlisted to help carry out joint projects conducted by the two institutions in water and environment fields and in research related to them, and they have access to the equipment available at the RSS.

University President Mahmoud Al Samra and RSS President Hani Al Mulki signed the agreement.

Meanwhile, Director of the RSS's Chemical Industries Department Saeed Aloush said in a statement Saturday that regulations and precautionary measures adopted in Jordan for handling pesticides and manufacturing them were very satisfactory compared with other Arab countries in the region.

Aloush, who prepared the study on this subject, said control was very strict on matters related to production, storage and distribution of pesticides in the Kingdom.

The study, conducted in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO), will serve as a model for countries located in the eastern Mediterranean region. Aloush said in his statement.

He said that the study covered the use of pesticides in agricultural, domestic and health fields. The study, he said, entailed visits to Jordanian homes, industrial businesses, factories, agricultural nurseries, and other places where pesticides are being used, stored and distributed.

The Chemical Industries Department concerns itself with activities related to paints, fuels and lubricants, inorganic materials, paper and cardboard, textiles, leather, plastic and rubber, and offers advice to public and private sectors in these fields.

According to a statement by the Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh to Parliament last week, the government has allocated JD 92.5 million to subsidise basic commodities for the coming year, up from JD 60 million in 1990.

Holders of coupons are only Jordanian citizens and they were issued to help them buy rice, sugar and milk at nearly half the

price for which these commodities are sold to non-Jordanians.

Ibrahim said that merchants holding the old coupons could present them to the Ministry of Supply from now and until next Thursday for reimbursement.

According to Ibrahim, the new coupons, to be distributed in the coming year, can be obtained at 88 ministry-appointed centres in various regions of the country, and only those holding ration cards also obtained from the ministry based on the family registration books, can be issued new coupons.

According to a statement by the Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh to Parliament last week, the government has allocated JD 92.5 million to subsidise basic commodities for the coming year, up from JD 60 million in 1990.

Holders of coupons are only Jordanian citizens and they were issued to help them buy rice, sugar and milk at nearly half the

House holds 12th session

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday holds its 12th session in the presence of the Cabinet to hear Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem's reply to a query by Deputy Ahmad Abbadi about the Foreign Ministry's recent internal changes.

The deputy had requested that the minister provide the House with a briefing on the recent transfers among ministry officials and on those retired.

The House will also review other matters raised by the public and a request by Deputy Fuad Khalafat about the Audit Bureau work and its relations with the other government departments.

National charter finalised Monday

AMMAN (Petra) — The general commission entrusted with preparing a national charter will hold a meeting Monday to endorse the charter's final version.

Commission Chairman Ahmad Obeidat said that the various aspects of the charter had already been discussed in full and the Monday meeting was only a formality for official endorsement.

For the time being, Obeidat said, the commission's secretariat is putting the finishing touches to the final formula.

He expressed hope that the general secretariat would be able to distribute copies of the charter to all members before Monday's session.



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WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "L'orient des cafes" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Mukarram Haghondoga at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Hassan Jalal at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILM

— Feature film entitled "The Hustler" at the American Cultural Centre — 7:00 p.m.

Fal Jordan Times

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Change in name

ONE SHOULD not fall into the trap of reading too much into the resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. To begin with, Shevardnadze has been the right hand man of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and as long as the president is still at the helm, the influence of the departing foreign minister and like-minded Soviet officials is not going to wane. As Shevardnadze is part of Gorbachev's inner circle, it is hard to believe that his resignation is not something that was carefully orchestrated to drive home a certain signal. It is common knowledge that Gorbachev is waging a battle for his political life and needs a catalyst to wage a war on the diehard conservatives still lingering in the Soviet system and possibly hoping for a comeback. It was no surprise, therefore, when Moscow announced that the departing foreign minister is indispensable and will stay on in a different capacity that would bring him even closer to the centre of Soviet power. It is no longer far-fetched to imagine that Shevardnadze would even be groomed to succeed Gorbachev in the future. There is really no ground to interpret the departure of Shevardnadze as a signal that Moscow is about to amend its ways and policies especially towards the West and the Arab World. The coordinates of Soviet external and internal politics are determined by a set of harsh economic and political realities from which Moscow can no longer extricate itself without some kind of a Marshall plan from Washington and its allies. With the Soviet economic and political structures near collapse, Moscow needs more than ever the support of the "haves" in the world, whether in the West or in the Gulf region. The International Monetary Fund has recently calculated that the Soviet Union needs quite a few billions of dollars in the course of 1991 just to feed itself and stay afloat. Everybody knows that for such a huge aid package to be extended to Moscow, the leadership there will be requested to go full speed ahead with its reform and restructuring plans. But Moscow's woes do not end there. With the fifteen republics composing the USSR gravitating towards greater independence, the Soviet president and close aides need to regroup in order to maintain a semblance of cohesion inside the frontiers of their superpower. There is no way the various republics can win their struggle for more independence without the aid and support of Western countries. Clearly, Moscow cannot afford to alienate Washington at this critical time for fear of losing all. No wonder then that the Soviet leaders have been towing Washington's line at every turn especially in the Gulf region. Who ever thought that the USSR could be defensive of the massive deployment of U.S. troops right next door to its southern flank, let alone being supportive of such build-up. The rules of the game have certainly changed for the Soviet Union and there is little hope of reversing the tide for as long as one can see. To pin hope on the artificial departure of Shevardnadze from the outward political scene in Moscow would be utterly over-optimistic and tantamount to wishful thinking. It would be far more prudent to calculate one's moves on the international theatre with this in mind.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily newspaper Saturday dwelt on Israel's reactions to the resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and said that the unexpected move brought about feverish actions in Israel which is now mobilising all possible means of transport to ensure the immigration of the largest possible number of Soviet Jews. Israel is in a hurry and in a race against time to bring in the Jews, lest there will be speedy change in Soviet policies regarding the emigration issue, the paper noted. It said that Israel is making ready now to absorb more than a million Jews from the Soviet Union, but is at the same time apprehensive that the foreign minister's resignation would bring this emigration to a halt. The paper called on the Arab countries to beware of the looming danger represented in the influx of Jews in the occupied Arab lands where they are to be settled because there is a real danger that the Jews would want to acquire more land at the expense of the Arab World. The Arabs should seize the opportunity of the loss of Israel's friend and call on the Soviet leadership to halt the emigration as soon as possible, a process which is harming the Palestinian cause. The paper also urged the Arab countries which are aligning themselves behind the United States in the Gulf crisis to seize the opportunity to demand that Moscow work for an international conference and implement U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the Middle East and the Palestine issue.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily reminds his readers that the U.N. Security Council resolution passed Thursday concerning protection for the Palestinians and convening an international peace conference came about as a direct result of Washington's fear of a rift within the Western alliance vis-a-vis Iraq. Therefore, we assume that it is due to Iraq that the Council has taken such a resolution and not as a result of the Arab countries' pressure on the U.S. administration which supported the vote, says Tareq Masriweh. Again, it is because of America's wish to reward Cairo for its pro-American stand in the Gulf crisis that the U.S. administration has decided to write off Egypt's billions of dollars debts, a move followed by the Gulf states which took a similar move, says the writer. It is because of Iraq and its firm stand with regard to Arab rights and justice that the Soviet Union has benefitted from the oil wealth by receiving millions of dollars in aid from the Gulf state while Washington improved its ties with Peking and opened talks with Cuba, a country with a long standing hostility towards the United States, says the writer. Therefore, he adds, only through a strong political stand and through linking the Gulf issue with the Palestine question that Iraq has been able to force the United States to change its policies, and not by kissing the hands of the American masters. It is Iraq and not the Arab mercenary countries which brought about a change, at a time when the whole world is going through a dark chapter of its history, says the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

The anatomy of farmers' debts

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

THE intricacies of farmers' debts and how to rearrange these debts is a source of fascination to politicians in Jordan. The government periodically makes decisions to relieve farmers from parts of their debts by forgiving interest or re-scheduling the principal or at least talking about it.

Today the Lower House of Parliament will debate the issue of farmers' debts. The deputies will call for the immediate rescue of the farmers, and the government will pretend to be sympathetic and will promise to do something about it as soon as the financial situation allows a move in that direction.

The total debt of the agriculture sector is currently in the neighbourhood of JD 100 million, of which JD 35 million was extended by the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC), JD 5 million by the Jordanian Cooperation Organisation (JCO), JD 50 million by commercial banks, and JD 10 million by middlemen, individuals and loan sharks.

Lending and repaying of loans is of course a continuous operation, because lending institutions re-lend to the different agricultural sectors amounts equal to or exceeding repayments. Therefore the actual cost of the debt is the interest paid which could be roughly estimated at JD 8 million per annum. This amount forms six per cent of the value added in the agricultural sector, or three per cent of the gross agricultural output.

This is obviously a small percentage. It indicates that the agricultural sector, taken as a whole, is not involved in heavy

indebtedness. On the contrary, it indicates that the agricultural sector is not getting its fair share of financing, and that the interest payable is not an excessive burden relative to the size of the operation.

However, one must realise that discussing the agricultural sector as a whole does not necessarily have the same implications as discussing the status of farmers and even peasants.

As a matter of fact, the commercial banks do not deal with farmers, much less with peasants. The amount that appears as agricultural credit in commercial banks' financial statistics is related to 'credit facilities' extended to companies and business firms in Amman and other regional capitals to finance their imports and stocks of agricultural equipment and machinery, and other agricultural material, such as seeds, fertilisers and pesticides and other tradeable agricultural inputs.

The Jordan Cooperative Organisation's total debts are JD 10 million, but these debts include bad debts due from cooperative societies that do not exist any more, or are not economically active. Another part went to housing, consumption and other forms of cooperatives that are not related in any way to agriculture.

The loans of the Agricultural Credit Cooperation are essentially a source of credit to farmers not peasants. I mean large-scale farmers who are not personally involved in agriculture. They are

simply landlords who borrow cheap money on the pretext that they will develop their property. Some of those posing as farmers are actually sitting in the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament. They will be eloquent in defending the poor farmers while they are defending their own self interest and trying to get richer embezzling public funds. Those big farmers prefer to borrow from the ACC to take advantage of the subsidised funds, hoping that one day the government will write off the debt or forgive the interest. In my guessimate, the share of the small farmers is not more than JD 7 million, or 20 per cent of ACC's total outstanding credit.

Thus the peasants and small farmers who really deserve help are indebted by JD 17 million, of which JD 10 million is provided by middlemen, individuals and loan sharks.

The partial debt relief and or re-scheduling that may be granted to the agricultural sector will be utilised by the landlords at the expense of the small farmers and real producers. The end result is to paralyse the Agricultural Credit Corporation, and curtail its capacity to recycle funds. This will reflect badly on small farmers who really need credit to finance their production. We claim that any relief granted to farmers across the board or with debts in excess of JD 5000 will amount to a gift from public funds to those who do not deserve it.

This is the map of the agricultural debt which politicians like to say represents a crisis, while we actually need more of it.

Gulf forces need better tactics if they plan to evict Iraq

By John Fullerton
Reuter

CAIRO — U.S.-led forces massed against Iraq could suffer unacceptable heavy losses in their first assault unless strategy is substantially improved, military analysts say.

They believe artillery, armour and combat engineering all need improvement before trying to force Iraq to end its occupation of Kuwait.

The United Nations has set Jan. 15 as the deadline for Iraq to leave the emirate it took over on Aug. 2. Army Lieutenant-General Calvin Waller, deputy commander of U.S. forces in the Gulf, said in Riyadh it could be as late as mid-February before some 430,000 U.S. troops in the area would be ready for attack.

But the analysts said that even after U.S. and allied reinforcements arrive there will be loopholes in strategy which will have to be closed.

Live-fire training involving air and ground forces was needed to improve coordination among the various arms and services in the multinational force.

The Iraqis have had more than four months to prepare fortified defences in Kuwait since their invasion.

The analysts said the ability of allied air power to overcome the minefields, bunkers and obstacles ahead of a ground assault should not be overestimated.

For example, bombing might simply scatter Iraqi anti-tank and anti-personnel mines rather than destroy them.

Some analysts predicted very heavy losses in the first few hours of any attempted breakthrough, particularly by infantry mounted in tank-killed Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs).

"I believe there will be more casualties during the assault (by mechanised infantry and tanks) than in any other area of combat," said independent

U.S. military analyst Ken Brower.

While tanks and infantry vehicles work together on the battle field, providing mutual protection, Brower said better protection was needed for the infantry if it was to get on top of Iraqi trenches and bunkers and silence anti-tank weapons.

"There is no point in having 10 (infantry) men behind one inch of armour trying to protect four (tank) men behind 20 inches of armour," Brower said.

Former Israeli tank commander and military researcher Ze'ev Eytan said current Israeli strategy was to place infantry groups in centurion tanks, shorn of their turrets, to provide more protection.

The small British contingent had ample engineers to destroy or bridge Iraq's defensive belt but the U.S. armoured forces were weak in this respect, the analysts said.

Brower said the U.S. M1-A1 Abrams tank — the cream of the armour on the allied side

— could not carry vital bulldozer blades, rollers or ploughs to deal with obstacles because its front suspension was too soft.

The U.S. marines' M-60A3 tanks were properly equipped in this regard but their armour was vulnerable at virtually any range to advanced anti-tank ammunition, he said.

German, American, British and Israeli analysts interviewed by Reuters agreed that the American M1-A1 and the British Challenger tanks were superior in firepower to their Iraqi counterpart, the T-72.

But the spearhead of any allied ground assault would be small — some six armoured divisions — against 30 Iraqi divisions of both modern and vintage Soviet-designed tanks.

The allies were also outnumbered both in the number and range of Iraq's Soviet and Western-built artillery. "Their artillery has a longer reach than ours," said Christopher Foss, military editor of Jane's Defence Weekly.

Gulf will host foreign forces for years

By Neil MacFarquhar
The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — No matter what the outcome of the Gulf crisis, a long-term foreign military presence will be needed to ensure stability in the region, Saudi and foreign military experts say.

There are varying views about the shape of the foreign presence and how long it will have to stay, but the experts agree it will take years until the Saudi military and armies of other Gulf states are able to protect their own territories.

Much depends on the time Saudi Arabia will need to overcome its manpower shortages and build an army large enough to eliminate the need for foreign protection.

Saudi Arabia plans to more than double the size of their armed forces over the next few years and buy up to \$20 billion worth of U.S. weaponry.

"We'll build up our armed forces to the point of adequate and absolute deterrent to any aggression," said Prince Fahd bin Abdullah, the deputy defence minister.

Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia's quick request for outside help,

showed how unprepared the Saudis and their neighbours were to defend themselves despite massive spending on advanced weapon systems over the last decade.

The invasion also woke the Gulf states to the harsh reality that they could no longer afford the squabbling and minimal security cooperation that had characterised their relations in the past.

The ruling Al Saud family had avoided creating a large army, fearing a competing centre of power. The 67,000-man regular forces and the 55,000-strong paramilitary National Guard were formed to balance each other.

Military experts say the Saudis will need external military support for four to 20 years until they can properly defend themselves. Iraq boasts a military force of 1 million.

Although Saudi Arabia has promised domestic Islamic conservatives that U.S. troops will leave as soon as the Gulf crisis is over, future security arrangements in the Gulf will undoubtedly involve the United States.

Thousands of American military personnel are expected to remain in the region on "training missions" to help the Saudis

absorb the new weapons, including about 700 M1A1 tanks and dozens of F-15 fighter planes.

More than 250,000 U.S. troops are now based in Saudi Arabia as part of the multinational force sent to the kingdom to deter Iraq.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has talked of the need for a new security structure in the region once the Kuwait crisis has been settled.

Observers say the most likely shape for a long-term force based in Saudi Arabia is one with foreign troops, possibly Americans, working under a U.N. flag, stationed around Kuwait's border.

The smaller emirates would likely provide shore facilities for foreign navies, much as they did during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

"We're going to have to cooperate on security, definitely," Secretary-General Abdullah Bishara of Kuwait said in an interview.

If Iraq pulls out with its military intact, Iraq will remain a major threat to Saudi Arabia and the vulnerable Gulf monarchies.

"The region can never find the same tranquillity as before. There's been so much rancor, so

much movement of people," said a Western military official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Saudis also see other potential threats.

To the south, last May's merger of north and south Yemen has created a new regional force. The new Yemen republic's 10 million people outnumber Saudi Arabia's 8 million indigenous people.

Yemen's backing for Iraq prompted the kingdom to expel hundreds of thousands of Yemenis who had been working in Saudi Arabia.

Traditional enmity has long prevented them from marking their common border and the Saudis plan to build new military bases there.

To the north, Jordan has also backed Iraq politically, despite its adherence to U.N. sanctions imposed after the invasion of Kuwait.

While Saudi Arabia's support for the Palestinian cause has always been more financial than military, the Arab-Israeli conflict is also a major source of regional instability.

"They see themselves surrounded by enemies," said a Western diplomat.

Wishy-washy U.N. resolution pulls no water

By Evelyn Leopold
Reuter

UNITED NATIONS — The U.N. Security Council adopted what many diplomats called a watershed resolution critical of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians but few agreed on whether it would bring substantive changes.

It was the first time the Council moved to actively involve itself in an on-going monitoring process to ensure the safety of Palestinian civilians in Israeli-occupied territories. Some diplomats considered it an opening to more concrete action.

But no one was certain whether the resolution could accomplish its objectives of quieting the violence in the territories and paving the way for negotiations on a solution.

For the Palestinians and the four non-aligned countries who originally proposed the resolution, the final version lacked teeth and could only be viewed as a tentative first step in joining the Council into further action.

"We would have liked this text to be stronger, much stronger indeed," said Security Council President Abdulla Al Ashraf of Yemen, an original co-sponsor of the resolution.

Israel rejected it altogether as discriminatory and interference in its internal affairs.

For several other delegations, including France and the Soviet Union, the Security Council needed to continue finding practical ways to protect the Palestinians in territories captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

For the United States, which bargained with the co-sponsors to the bitter end, the resolution was a symbolic warning to Israel.

Despite the resolution's critical stance against Israel, including a denunciation of its deportation of Palestinian civilians, Washington achieved a diplomatic victory in preventing calls for a Middle East peace conference from being included in the resolution.

Instead, it was relegated to a non-binding Council statement which thereby prevented Israel, which feels a large conference would be biased against it, from being in violation of a specific Council demand.

But it was the first time

Washington permitted reference to the parity in a Security Council context and it was the third time this year the United States supported a resolution critical of Israel.

Negotiations over the conference stretched out for weeks and were solved in the last minutes when Finnish Ambassador Klaus Tornudd began to mediate between U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering and Malaysian Ambassador Ismail Razali.

Nevertheless, the peace conference is supported by nearly every council member.

France's representative, Jean-Marc Rochereau de La Sabliere, said the five permanent members of the Council could offer the necessary framework for "a global solution." British Ambassador David Hamann said reference to the conference was a "step forward and a major benefit."

But the timing of the resolution proved embarrassing to Washington, which went to great lengths to insert a phrase in the statement divorcing the Middle East peace conference from the Gulf crisis.

"Saddam Hussein has tried to link the idea of an international conference to his invasion of Kuwait and the Council has deprived him of any satisfaction in this regard," Pickering told the Council.

The resolution asks U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to monitor and observe the situation "on an urgent basis" and use resources already in the region.

Israel has already rejected any U.N. involvement. Ambassador Yoram Aridor told the Council, "we will not accommodate any discriminatory procedure or treatment."

Aridor said Israel got "special, separate and unequal treatment" from the Council on a consistent basis when it tried to defend itself.

The U.N. truce supervision organisation has 291 military observers and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency has a staff of 2,300. But Pickering said the United States would object to any change in their mandate.

The resolution also asks the Secretary-General to explore a meeting of the 169 signatories to Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in wartime.

Lebanon's new premier.... 'a lamb among wolves'

By Nadim Ladjki
Reuter

BEIRUT — Omar Karami, chosen prime minister as Lebanon struggles towards peace, is a relative newcomer to office but his political roots run deep in a Sunni Muslim family which has led the northern port city of Tripoli for decades.

He is expected to form a "national reconciliation" cabinet including warlords of the religious and political militias that have been tearing the country to pieces for 15 years.

"He will be a lamb among wolves. His only strength will be his excellent relation with Syria," said one politician.

Born in 1936, Karami became

Tripoli's political chief when his brother, Prime Minister Rashid Karami, was assassinated by a bomb in his army helicopter on June 1, 1987.

Their father, Abdul Hamid, was premier in 1945 and mufti of Tripoli — the city's top Sunni Muslim clergyman.

The succession was typical of a country in which powerful families monopolise the political leadership of their religious communities for decades.

The new prime minister has repeatedly vowed to continue the tradition of his brother, who believed in Lebanon's unity and Muslim-Christian coexistence.

One of the strongest Muslim leaders in Lebanon's modern history, Rashid Karami was

closely allied with Syria and opposed Christian domination of the political system in the years when a shifting population balance made and more difficult to sustain.

But he also opposed violence and, unlike other Lebanese chieftains, never formed his followers into a private army.

Back in 1953, Rashid Karami was one of the leaders of a six-month civil war that led to a U.S. military intervention.

He became a prime minister a year later and was in and out of office for nearly 30 years, heading 10 different cabinets.

The only official post Omar Karami has held was education minister under Prime Minister Selim Hoss in a cabinet formed

when Elias Hrawi was elected president in November 1989.

The Lebanese presidency had at that stage just been reborn under an Arab League peace plan after an interregnum of more than a year.

The constitution has since been amended to give Muslims more political power but the peace plan retains one of Lebanon's oldest political formulas — a Maronite Christian president and a Sunni Muslim prime minister.

Militiamen have now pulled out of Beirut and surrounding areas, allowing the divided capital to be reunited under the control of a revitalised regular army.

Hoss's government resigned on Wednesday to clear the way

for a peacemaking administration.

"I know the difficulties facing me, but with faith, strong will and sincere cooperation from all factions we can reach safety," Karami said on Thursday in his first statement after being appointed.

The next government is a reconciliatory one. Its goals will be disbanding and disarming the militias and rebuilding the country. Only legitimate guns will remain in Lebanon," he said.

In an interview last month he said: "It is necessary to reconcile national leaders, but this is not easy because reconciliation should be based on deserting all policies opposing the country's unity."

Karami maintains good links with Syria, the main foreign power in Lebanon, and frequently travels to Damascus, to meet top officials. He believes Beirut and Damascus are linked by historic ties and need "a special relationship."

He graduated in law from the University of Cairo, started his career as a lawyer in his home city in 1962 and ran his brother's Tripoli political machine.

Karami is a sharp-tongued character with a sense of humour. A keen tennis player and angler, he also enjoys reading about politics and history. He is married to Mariam Al-Koubtan and has four children: Youmon, Zainab, Faisal and Khaled.

Past, present and future of E. European sport

LONDON (R) — On a clear September night under a full Adriatic moon, the past, present and future of East European sport froze into an unforgettable tableau.

Before an emotional audience at the European Championships in Split, Yugoslavia, the East German squad departed an international athletics arena for the last time as a separate nation.

They left enduring memories of sporting excellence over the past 30 years during which a state of 16 million people rivalled the United States and the Soviet Union as one of the world's great sporting nations.

In their final athletics championships, the East Germans continued superiority was reflected by a haul of 12 gold medals, the most by any nation.

And in Katrin Krabbe, poised and photogenic, they showed the way ahead for the fortunate few in Eastern Europe with a sprinter who is guaranteed a lucrative future on the international athletics circuit.

In a year of dizzy political change, Germany's unification dominated the East European sporting scene.

East Germany had manufac-

tured the world's most formidable sporting organisation in a propaganda exercise designed to demonstrate the superiority of the Communist system.

But with the downfall of the old regime, this organisation has disintegrated with trainers and administrators thrown out of work in their thousands.

"Like much of the whole country, sport is in crisis," Olympic shot champion Ulf Timmerman said. "The system that helped us develop talent is in danger."

Heike Drechsler, the European women's long jump champion, second to Krabbe over 200 metres in Split, agreed.

"We have already established ourselves. For the younger ones it will be much more difficult," she said.

Drechsler, a member of the old East German parliament, was one of a number of sports people who attracted various degrees of opprobrium for their association with a widely-hated government.

Figure skater Katerina Witt was roundly booed when she appeared on stage at a rock concert and her country home was twice burgled this year.

As the old sporting dynasties

followed political structures into oblivion, East Europeans were for the first time allowed to keep all their prize money.

In athletics, veteran Romanian Doina Melinte was first out of the blocks, winning \$100,000 for breaking the world indoor 1,500 metres record.

Melinte, the 1948 Olympic 800 metres champion, chased dollars throughout the northern summer on the Grand Prix circuit.

By the time she arrived in Split, she had left her best form far behind her but she was also undoubtedly richer than at any stage of her long career.

The World Cup provided the perfect showcase for East European soccer talent and the wealthy European clubs were quick to exploit a rich pool.

Czechoslovakia's national captain Ivan Hasek signed for French club St Etienne and striker Tomas Skuhravy went to Italy's Genoa.

Inevitably, though, the Czechoslovak league was impoverished and no club team got beyond the second round of any European club competition in the autumn.

Romanian footballers also left in droves with almost the entire national team signed up for fore-

ign clubs.

Around 40 players flocked to clubs in Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. They were followed by the leading exponents in handball and volleyball.

But although some lucky individuals prospered, including Yugoslav tennis players Monica Seles and Goran Ivanisevic who are already dollar millionaires, sport as a whole in Eastern Europe suffered during the year.

As backward state-controlled economies stumbled into the harsh light of the market economy, sports administrators face a bleak future without the subsidies used to pamper the elite and cater for the masses.

Hungary's new minister of sport, former swimmer, sports administrator and journalist Rezo Gallov, admits he faces a Herculean task to make the country's sporting organisations self-financing.

"Going over to a market economy means progress in every field with one exception — sport," Gallov said.

The total state subsidy for sport was 1.3 billion forints (\$21.3 million) annually. We have to find a new financial

structure to replace that."

Gallov has proposed sponsorship, a levy on soccer pool proceeds and two per cent tax on social security payments.

Romania, traditionally strong in gymnastics, boxing, canoeing and weightlifting, saw standards decline as state patronage diminished.

Reform has been muddled with clubs finding themselves caught in limbo between the old and the new. The only first division soccer club to succeed in self-financing is Universitatea Craiova, whose players recently staged protests and threatened a strike to win financial independence from the university which owns them.

Poland appeared to fare better than most, despite the endemic economic crisis and the withdrawal of subsidies which bankrupted many small sports organisations.

The first division soccer league remained intact and Legia Warsaw striker Roman Kosecki was targeted by several clubs, including England's Aston Villa.

By contrast, sport in the Soviet Union accurately mirrored the disarray and confusion

of a society convulsed by political changes and plummeting living standards.

The same tensions which have threatened the Soviet Union with political disintegration took their toll on the soccer pitches and basketball courts with teams from Lithuania and Georgia opting out of nation-wide competitions.

Leonid Drachevsky, first deputy chairman of the state sports committee expressed the once unthinkable in an interview last October.

Drachevsky, asked about the prospects of future showdowns between athletes from the Soviet Union, United States and united Germany admitted: "If there is anyone to drop out it could only be us if we are deprived of public, state and legal support."

As the year ended, allegations of widespread drug taking were voiced in the German press.

One publication claimed 280 athletes and teams in the former East Germany had used performance-enhancing drugs and named 140 track and field athletes who had won Olympic or World Championship medals, claiming they had all used banned substances.

Karpov calls timeout

LYON, France (AP) — Anatoly Karpov called a timeout for the 22nd game Saturday in the World Chess Championship with Garry Kasparov, postponing the game until Monday.

Kasparov, the reigning champion, is on the verge of retaining his title. He leads 11.5-9.5 and needs only a draw to clinch a 12-12 tie.

There are no more timeouts left by either player. In case of an adjournment the regulations state they must continue playing the following day.

However, both of the players could agree to ask for a technical timeout for the Christmas Eve game. If the International Chess Federation grants it, the 22nd game would start Wednesday. Kasparov has won the last

three times he has had white in the nine games in Lyon. He will have white in the 22nd game with Karpov defending black.

They have had five draws in the French portion of the championship. They had 10 draws in the 12 games played at New York between Oct. 8 and Nov. 7.

Even if Kasparov clinches a tie in the series, the two Soviet grandmasters will continue playing to see who wins the majority of the \$3-million purse. Otherwise it will be split.

Kasparov won the title from Karpov in 1985 and has defended it in 1986 and 1987. Karpov took the championship in 1975 when American Bobby Fischer refused to defend the title he won in 1972.

Italy beats Cyprus, 4-0

LIMASSOL (AP) — Italy coasted to an easy 4-0 victory over Cyprus here Saturday in a qualifying game for Group Three of the European Soccer Championship.

After scoring three goals in the first half, the Italian team took it easy playing as if they were in a practice game rather than an important international match.

The game was so one-sided that a Cypriot radio commentator apologised to listeners during live coverage saying: "I am terribly sorry but every time the Italians approach our goal we fear they will score again."

Cyprus managed to make a couple of forays against the Ita-

lian goal area in the first few minutes of play to the delight and wild cheering of the partisan crowd of 12,000 in the Tisiron Stadium.

Their brave initial showing raised hopes they might manage to score their first victory in an international match in 17 years.

But their short-lived superiority vanished as the Italians overcame an initial hesitation to impose complete mastery, scoring their first goal, a header by Pietro Vierchowod at the 15th minute.

Aldo Serena scored the second goal at the 22nd minute, as well as the fourth, just three minutes into the second half.

Spaniard wins women's World Cup Slalom

MORZINE, France (AP) — Blanca Fernandez-Ochoa of Spain returned from injury to win the World Cup women's slalom here Saturday after Austrian star Petra Kronberger faltered in the first run.

Fernandez-Ochoa had a combined time of 1 minute, 27.66 seconds after leading the first run with 44.08.

Second overall was Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden, 1:28.61 while Switzerland's Vreni Schneider was third, 1:28.72 after going the fastest in the second leg.

"After the first run I felt good and thought I could win it," Fernandez-Ochoa said. "I didn't

have any pressure in the second run and it's a nice Christmas gift."

It was Fernandez-Ochoa's third victory on the World Cup circuit but her first since a slalom in Sestriere, Italy, in 1987. She missed almost 20 months because of a shoulder injury but has returned to form. She placed in the top 10 in the season opening slalom and giant slalom in Val Zoldana, Italy.

Kronberger, who had won four of the first six races this season including the first Slalom, nearly fell at the start of the first run and missed a gate.

Syrians cause sensation at Dubai Karate Championship

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Syria upset the team favourite, Japan, Friday to win the gold medal in the 1990 World Karate Championship.

And Morocco's Malika Sayed caused another upset when she won the women's individual Kumite gold medal by beating Australia's Kim Marriott in the final of the three-day championship hosted by Dubai.

Khalija Boustani, also of Morocco, won the bronze.

Japan dominated the rest of the competition, capturing three gold, three silver and bronze

medals in the championship sponsored by Dubai Duty Free and adjudicated by the Japan Karate Association.

Some 400 contestants from 37 countries started off in the contest.

No one expected Syria to reach the finals, and few gave them a chance against a Japanese team including Masao Kagawa, the world champion.

He failed to find his usual killing blow in the final bout and Syria won in tremendous style.

Later Kagawa beat his colleague Mobyuki Arimoto for

the gold medal to retain his title in the individual Kumite. The judges could not separate Korea's Young Jung Koh and Pema Temang of Nepal and both were given a bronze medal.

Kagawa won another gold in the individual Kata Competition.

Iran's Mohammad Nader-Berge won the silver and Nobuyuki Arimoto added a bronze to his silver win the Kumite.

Malika Sayed was carried around the hall waving Moroc-

co's national flag when she won the individual Kumite. The 16-year-old Kim Marriott from Perth in Western Australia won the silver in her first major championships.

In the Individual Kata, Japan swept the board with Maiko Asano getting gold, Yuka Asano, silver, and Kazumi Kamiya the bronze.

The medals were presented by the United Arab Emirates Minister of Defence, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashi Al Maktoum.

U.S. shot put record holder to tell his story

WASHINGTON (AP) — Shot put world record holder Randy Barnes takes his first step back toward competition this weekend when he tells a U.S. sports panel his side of the story on how he was banned for steroid use.

Barnes claims that the drug test that halted his rise in the sports world was mishandled at all steps by Swedish authorities. He is asking the Athletics Congress, the governing body for American track and field (TAC), to allow him to compete

in the United States and help clear the way for his return to the international ring.

"In six years of competition I have never taken any prohibited substance," Barnes said in an affidavit to TAC. "I have been subjected to dope tests on approximately 30 occasions since 1985 and have always tested negatively."

A silver medalist at the 1988 Olympics, Barnes has some \$200,000 in annual income riding on his ability to put the shot and is trying to wipe the suspension away before the 1991 World Championships and the 1992 Olympics.

A three-member TAC panel will hear Barnes' appeal. If they recommend his suspension be lifted, Barnes could compete in American meets while awaiting appeal of his suspension by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF).

Barnes, 21, was suspended by the IAAF this fall after author-

ities said he tested positive for use of methyltestosterone at a meet in Malmö, Sweden, an event he won with a put of 71 feet, 11 1-16 inches (22.73 metres). He set the world record of 75-10 1-16 (23.01 metres) in May in Los Angeles.

Leading Barnes' appeal is Washington lawyer John Dowd, who defended Pete Rose in his tax evasion case.

Hearing Barnes' appeal will be Cliff Wiley, vice president of TAC, Tim Baker and Jill Pilgrim. A Congress official said they have two days to issue a statement on the hearing, and that could be anything from a final recommendation.

Barnes says there is no way of telling whose samples were examined before he was thrown out of international meets.

"Numerous departures" from testing guidelines "demonstrate the total unreliability of the test results," his appeal to TAC said.

Revenge, money and luck to decide yacht race winner

SYDNEY (R) — Revenge, money and sheer luck will determine the winner of the 1990 Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race, according to skippers and crew of the 49-strong fleet.

British Maxi Rothmans starts favourite in the 630 nautical miles race beginning Wednesday.

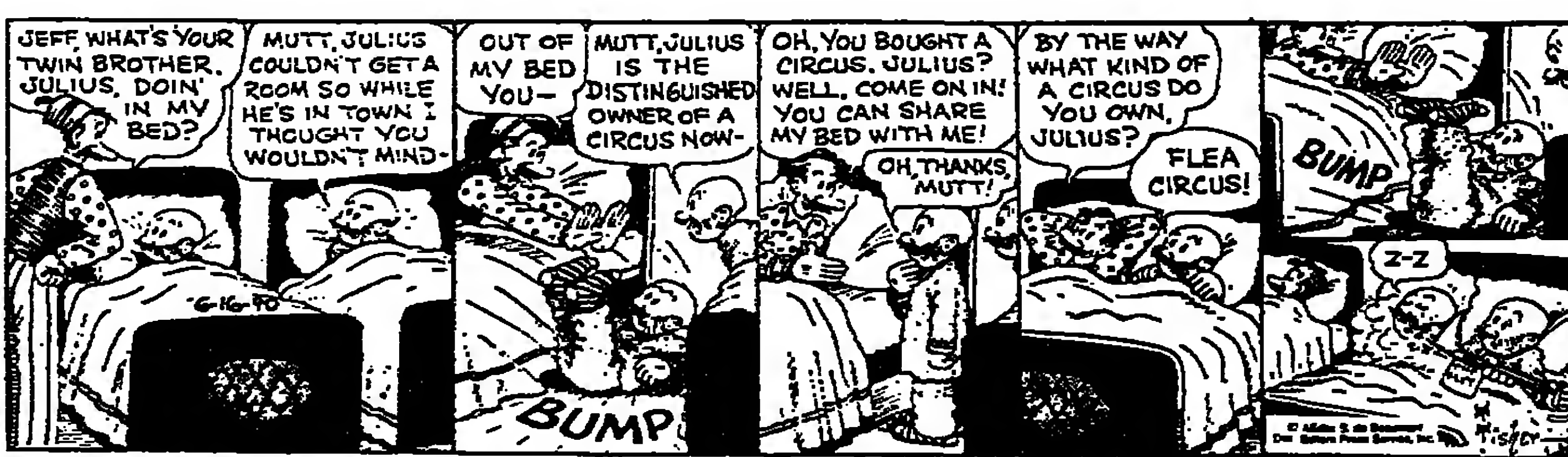
The 24-metre high-tech yacht, fourth in the 1989-90 Whitbread Round the World Race, epitomises professional ocean racing with its unlimited budget and

competition-hardened crew. "Of course we are looking for line honours in the big race — and the record," said skipper and Olympic yachtsman Lawrence Smith. "It may be unlikely, but I am sure it's possible."

American Maxi Kialoa set the race best of two days 14 hours 36 minutes 56 seconds in 1975.

"We will certainly be a much faster boat than Kialoa was in those days, it just depends on if you get the right weather," said Smith.

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY DECEMBER 23, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A really wonderful day for you to get busy and put your new plans in motion which can bring you much happiness and make you feel like you are at the top of the heap. A time for action.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Older friends who are in a position to give you the support and backing you want are yours for the asking in the daytime but tonight be careful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can go to a very experienced and worldly minded person and get good ideas for your advancement and reputation but avoid a demanding friend.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A day to renew your mind in the rightness of principles that have long been accepted as the right means by which to exist and make headway.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have real prophetic insight and see how to handle tense and disagreeable situations if you will be still and listen to yourself.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) One you have had as a partner for a considerable period of time is willing to give you partnership arrangements that is very good for you both.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can certainly get your assignments done much better now

if you show one with whom you have assisted for a long time and you need his help.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Have a good time with those longtime partners who have brought you joy and the things that mean the most to you and you will find results.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Think over what you want your own clan to do and let them know you will do at least your fair share of the project involved and be happy.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) There are a number of close contacts in your daily life who want the right answers so go with them to studies, services that achieve this.

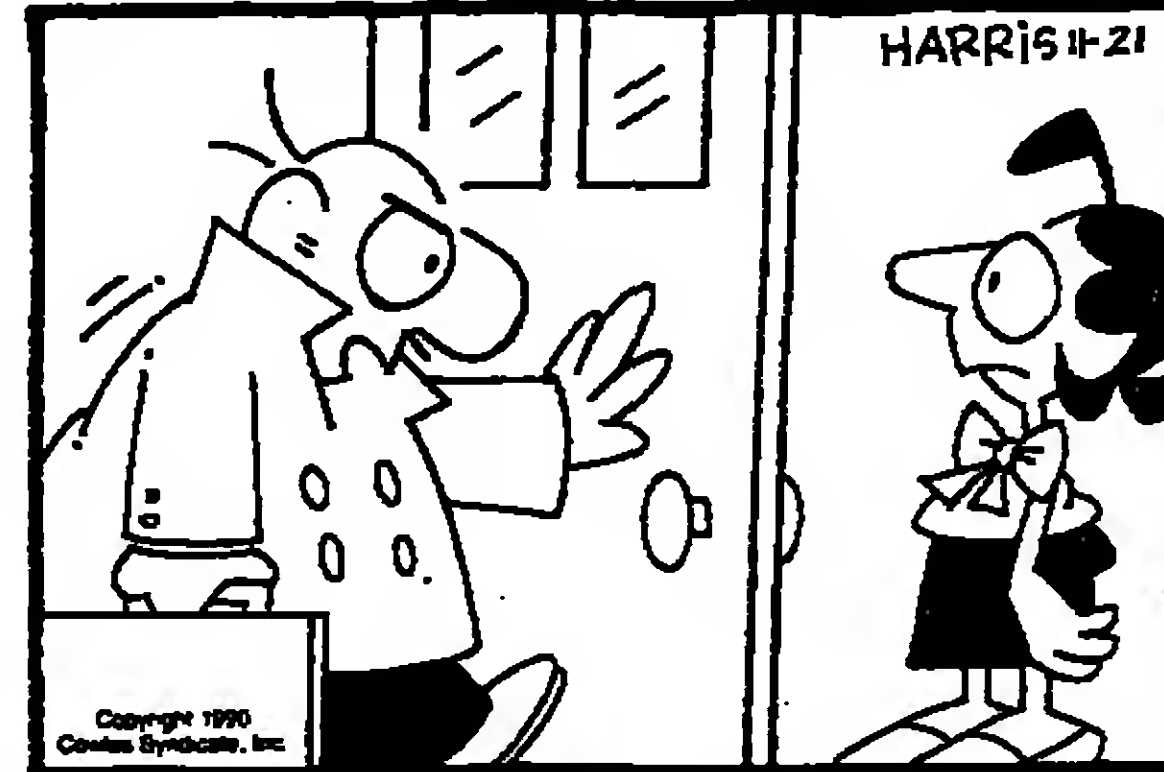
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A day to think in terms of a greater abundance that you can build up with steady work then tonight steer clear of demanding friends.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your mind is brilliant now and if you carry through with a subject that can be very helpful to you make sure that you do open up facts.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is your day to make sure you reflect, meditate and concentrate upon fine ideas you have not known before this, then avoid a temptation.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

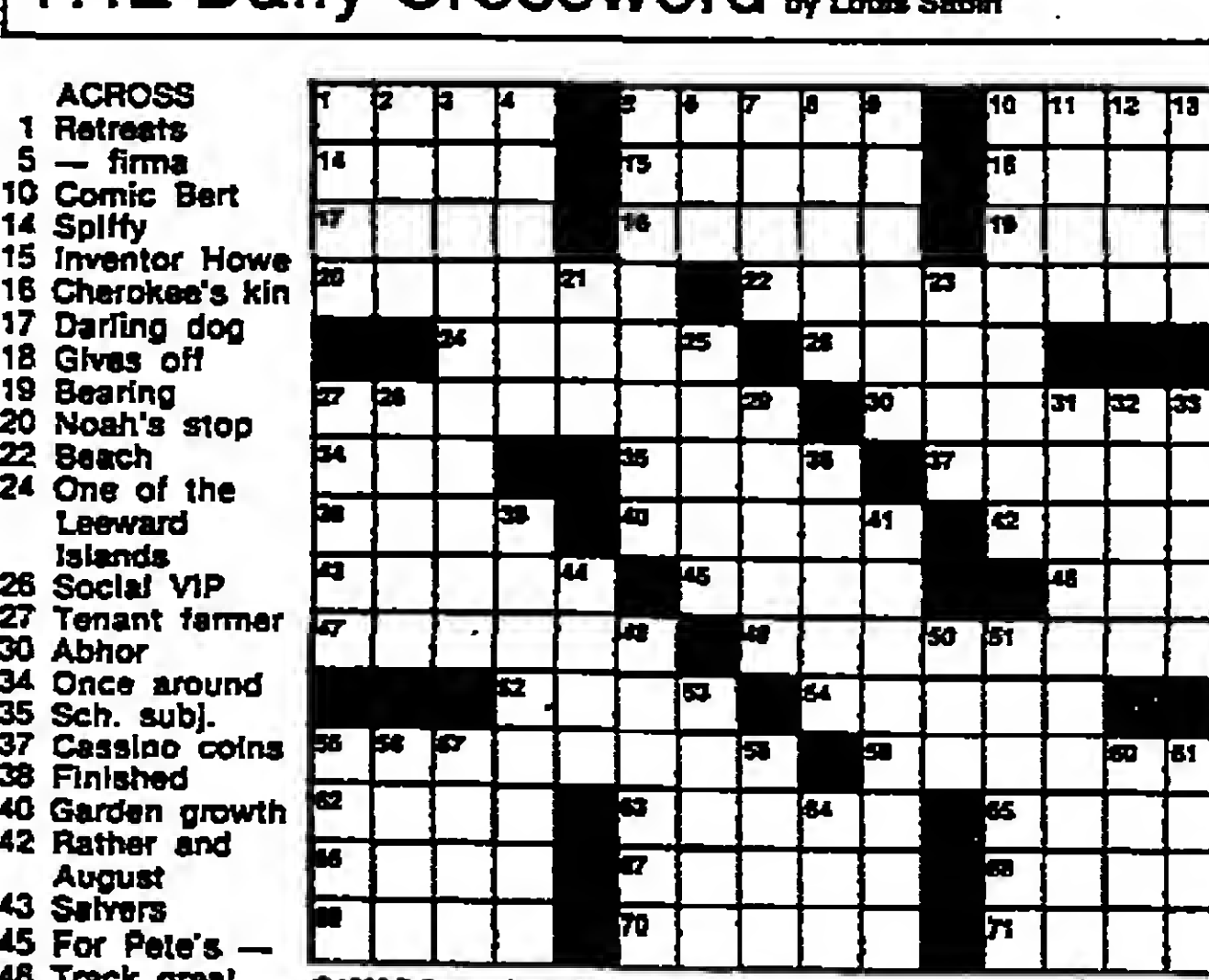
NACYF
BIMOL
PERUSH
TELKET



Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: GOING ALTAR BARREL LAWYER
Answer: What "little white lies" usually are — YELLOW

THE Daily Crossword



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

ACROSS
1 Retreats
5 — firms
10 Comic Bert
14 Salford
15 Inventor Howe
16 Cherokee's kin
17 Darling dog
18 Slaves off
19 Bearing
20 Noah's stop
22 Beach
24 One of the Lawland Islands
26 Social VIP
27 Tenant farmer
30 Abhor
34 Once around
37 Casino coins
38 Finished
40 Garden growth
42 Rafter and
43 August
45 Servers
46 For Pete's
48 Track great, Sebastian
49 Choose
50 Pioneer garb
52 Statutes
54 Kind of boat
56 Food additive
58 Most recent
62 Medley
63 Mother-in-law of Ruth
65 Korean river
66 Onion's kin
67 Plato's
68 "L" — west
69 Throw
70 Lanchester and Martelli
71 Alphabet quartet
DOWN
1 Sicilian spa
2 Kodak a.g.
3 Fruit ring
4 He gets an eyelid
5 Linka breakers
6 Freddy's street
7 Reformers Jacob
8 Badgerlike animal
9 Pounce on
10 Repair for a Detroit dud
11 Solo
12 Goes fast
13 Tors
21 St.
23 Unruffled
25 Ger. author
26 Ger. author
27 Token takers
28 Le — Fr.
29 Defense org.
31 Hot-dogging
32 Vietnam city
33 Ruhr city
34 Fruit ring
35 Awesome weapons
36 Expressions after toping
41 Vegetable-eating flower children?
44 Clocitox
46 Sharp pain
48 Sharp pain
50 Dakota Indian
51 Twin's Tom
53 Growl
49 Frisky equine
56 Grocery item
57 Exaggerates
58 Takes off
60 Narrow board
61 Ballet garb
64 "Give — a break!"

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ Q53 ♠ A10 ♠ KQ832 ♠ K93
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

hold:
♠ AQ1096 ♠ AJ3 ♠ K5 ♠ K3
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
What do you bid now?

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ A962 ♠ J82 ♠ KQ753 ♠ A
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ A962 ♠ J82 ♠ KQ753 ♠ A
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ K6 ♠ K8 ♠ KQ10952 ♠ J52
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Dbl 2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?

Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ AJ654 ♠ 77 ♠ J65 ♠ K963
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?

LA SEMAINE...

de Suleiman Sweiss

Budget 1991: l'austérité

Mercredi dernier la chambre des députés a adopté le projet de budget 1991 de l'Etat. Cinquante députés l'ont approuvé tandis que 25 autres s'y sont opposés. Dans ses grandes lignes, c'est un budget semblable à ceux des années précédentes. Tenant compte de la crise du Golfe, le budget réduit encore un peu les dépenses, ce qui marque une nette tendance vers l'austérité.

Le nombre d'opposants au budget cette année est beaucoup plus important que l'an dernier. Ce vote traduit-il une déception face à la performance gouvernementale depuis un an? Peut-on le considérer comme un signe avant-coureur d'une volonté de changer l'équipe ministérielle, ou tout simplement la remanier pour permettre aux Frères Musulmans et à leurs alliés de siéger au gouvernement?

En l'absence de réponses à ces questions, revenons au budget et aux débats parlementaire de la semaine dernière. La liste traditionnelle de nos problèmes a été lue et relue sans que de véritables solutions ou même de simples propositions concrètes ne soient avancées: stagnation économique, baisse des revenus, augmentation du taux de chômage et du déficit de la balance commerciale, inflation, problèmes de l'agriculture et de l'industrie, etc. Avec les retombées de la crise du Golfe, nous avons perdu les marchés de l'Irak, du Koweït et d'autres pays du Golfe. Le problème des dettes extérieures s'est aggravé et certains députés sont allés jusqu'à réclamer l'annulation pure et simple de ces dettes (8,5 milliards de dollars), puisque —qu'on fasse— le gouvernement ne sera pas en mesure de les rembourser après la fermeture du robinet des subventions et prêts en provenance des pays du Golfe.

Pour justifier la détérioration de la situation économique, le gouvernement évoque les répercussions de la crise du Golfe sur notre pays. Ses effets négatifs sont certes indéniables, mais il vaudrait mieux parler des «leçons» à tirer de la crise du Golfe que de considérer cette crise comme une excuse ou un prétexte à la détérioration.

La crise économique a révélé au grand jour notre dépendance extérieure. La première leçon à tirer consiste donc à chercher les moyens par lesquels nous pouvons compter sur nous mêmes et développer notre capacité de production. Alléger les normes de salubrité à la campagne (dans des limites raisonnables) pour permettre aux ruraux d'élever des animaux serait un pas vers la réduction de nos importations de viande et d'autres produits alimentaires. C'est un exemple parmi tant d'autres.

Réformer notre administration est un autre moyen de réaliser des économies conséquentes. Un nombre important de députés a cité —à titre d'exemple— le cas de la banque Pétra. La Banque Centrale a versé 250 millions de dinars pour indemniser les pertes de «Pétra», dues à la corruption et à la mauvaise gestion. Nous avons encore le sentiment que l'élaboration de la politique économique du pays est l'affaire de quelques responsables. Le budget par lui-même ne peut pas remplacer l'effort collectif nécessaire pour définir une politique globale qui aide notre pays à sortir de la crise.

Plusieurs députés et forces politiques ont réclamé la tenue d'une «conférence économique» au niveau national pour étudier l'ensemble des problèmes et y trouver les solutions adéquates. Le pouvoir exécutif semble ignorer cette revendication sans donner d'explications. Pourtant, cette idée a reçu un écho favorable dans certaines hautes sphères dirigeantes.

Il est grand temps de regarder la réalité en face. Nous devons travailler sérieusement pour construire une économie dont le développement dépende essentiellement de facteurs intérieurs. De même, nous devons réapprendre à vivre selon nos moyens. Au vu des réactions populaires de ces derniers mois face aux mesures d'austérité, on est en droit d'estimer que le peuple est prêt à faire des sacrifices. Il serait souhaitable que les responsables en profitent pour guérir le pays de ses maladies chroniques.



Interview de Mgr Raouf

Noël en Jordanie

C'était il y a 1990 ans, à 75 kilomètres à l'ouest d'Amman... Dans la nuit du 24 au 25 décembre, Jésus naissait à Bethléem (aujourd'hui en Palestine occupée) et, avec lui, naissait la religion chrétienne. Les Chrétiens (catholiques, protestants, orthodoxes) sont une petite minorité en Jordanie; ils ne représentent pas plus de 5% de la population. Mais la fête de Noël qui commémore cette double naissance est devenue une fête mondiale, presque autant civile que spirituelle, et il est fréquent que des Musulmans saisissent cette occasion de festoyer et d'échanger des cadeaux. Pour évoquer Noël, «Le Jourdain» a rencontré Mgr Raouf, représentant du délégué apostolique de Jérusalem en Jordanie depuis 1977.

Le Jourdain: Noël en Jordanie prend-il une forme particulière du fait de la proximité de Bethléem et du caractère minoritaire de la communauté chrétienne?

Mgr Raouf: Malgré son caractère minoritaire, la communauté chrétienne de Jordanie est considérée comme faisant partie intégrante de la société jordanienne, au même degré que sa sœur musulmane. Noël est donc célébré en toute solennité, spirituelle et civile, par les Chrétiens des différents rites (Catholiques, Orthodoxes, Protestants) à la même date. On installe des crèches dans les églises, et des arbres illuminés prennent place dans les églises et les villas des maisons, y compris chez bon nombre de familles musulmanes. En ce qui me concerne, je prononce une messe solennelle à 10h30 en l'église Notre-Dame de l'Annonciation à Jebel Wehdeh et je reçois les gens pour la fête. La journée se termine par la messe de minuit que je prononce au même endroit.



Mgr Raouf.

LJ: On dit que l'an dernier la Sainte Vierge, mère de Jésus, a fait une apparition à Jebel Wehdeh. Qu'en est-il au juste?

Mgr R: Ce qui est sûr, c'est qu'une dame qui vit toujours ici, à Jebel Wehdeh, a affirmé, un jour d'octobre 1989, avoir vu la Vierge dans sa maison. L'église a noté le fait comme elle enregistre toutes les observations de ce genre, mais elle n'a pas reconnu à ce jour la validité de cette apparition. Le seul résultat tangible et effectif de cet événement est que dans le mois qui a suivi, beaucoup de gens ont prié se sont confessés, ont communiqué, et que des Catholiques non assidus sont devenus plus fervents. Cela a secouru à l'époque la foi des Chrétiens, mais

LJ: Originaire de Nazareth, où vivaient les parents de Jésus, et président de l'Université de Bethléem où il est né, pouvez-vous nous dire comment se déroule la cérémonie de Noël dans ces lieux sacrés?

Mgr R: J'ai vécu un Noël à Bethléem il y a trente ans. La cérémonie est différente car il y a des traditions que la ville doit respecter. Le patriarche latin de Jérusalem quitte Jérusalem à 13h. Il est reçu à

aujourd'hui ces choses sont oubliées et je ne pense pas qu'il faille s'attendre au moindre attroupement autour de cette maison le jour de Noël.

LJ: La communauté chrétienne de Jordanie est-elle très dispersée ou se localise-t-elle dans certaines cités bien déterminées où elle est majoritaire? Je pense notamment à Madaba.

Mgr R: Madaba, c'est vrai, a été une ville chrétienne dans le passé mais ce n'est plus du tout le cas aujourd'hui. La communauté y est même devenue minoritaire et le maire de la ville comme le conseil municipal y sont musulmans, à l'exception de deux conseillers. Il ne reste en fait que trois villages dont on peut dire qu'ils sont absolument chrétiens, c'est Smakieh au nord de Kerak, Fuheis à l'ouest d'Amman et Shatana au sud d'Irbid. Ces villages sont le lieu de sédentarisation de tribus chrétiennes qui les peuplent quasi-exclusivement. Partout ailleurs, les communautés sont toutes mélangées et vivent généralement en bonne harmonie.

LJ: En quoi consiste exactement votre rôle en Jordanie?

Mgr R: Nous fonctionnons comme une ambassade. Nous transmettons au Vatican les informations politiques et religieuses dont nous disposons sur la région, et nous relayons ses messages. Tout cela en liaison permanente avec le délégué apostolique de Jérusalem. En ce moment, par exemple, nous travaillons à l'organisation d'un voyage pour une délégation populaire jordanienne de Chrétiens et de Musulmans qui désirerait rencontrer Sa Sainteté le Pape et qui doivent se rendre au Vatican du 5 au 10 janvier prochain. Pour le jour de Noël, aussi, on m'a demandé de participer à la veillée pour la paix que les femmes étrangères en Jordanie organisent à Amman. [Voir encadré.]

LJ: A quand remonte le dernier voyage du Pape dans la région?

Mgr R: A 1964. C'est un peu paradoxal, j'en conviens, que le pape actuel, qui a fait plusieurs fois le tour du monde, ne se soit pas encore rendu en Terre Sainte. Mais compte-tenu de la situation politique tendue qui règne depuis longtemps dans la région, il a semblé qu'une telle visite créerait plus de troubles qu'elle n'apporterait de sérénité.

LJ: A l'approche de la nouvelle année, quels souhaits avez-vous à formuler?

Mgr R: Je souhaite que la paix règne dans ce pays où la paix a été donnée au monde entier. Si l'on parvient à faire cette paix le monde entier vivra dans le calme, et dans la sagesse.

Propos recueillis par Jean-Marc Bordes

Une veillée pour la paix

A l'occasion des fêtes de Noël, le groupe des femmes étrangères en Jordanie organise, dans la nuit du 24 au 25 décembre, une veillée aux chandelles pour la paix et la justice au Moyen-Orient. Les personnes de toute confession et de toute nationalité sont invitées à se joindre à elles munies d'une bougie pour appeler le monde à la raison. La veillée aura lieu aux abords de la mosquée du roi Abdallah, à Abdali.

L'AFFICHE

F O C U S

L'état d'une année

A la fin de chaque année, Kathy Kakish, productrice du Jordan Weekly, semi-hebdomadaire de Radio Jordan traitant de sujets socio-économiques, prépare une édition spéciale de son magazine. Pendant une heure, ce numéro annuel, surnommé le Jordan Yearly propose (le vendredi 28 à 14h10 et le samedi 29 à 12h05, cette année) un recueil des entretiens que la productrice estime avoir été les plus révélateurs des vicissitudes de la société jordanienne.

Le Jourdain: Y a-t-il une différence marquée entre le Jordan Weekly et le Yearly?

Kathy Kakish: Le Yearly se veut un résumé —à travers des perceptions multiples— des événements qui ont profondément touché le pays pendant l'année. Si dans l'édition 1990, la crise du Golfe occupe une place prépondérante, c'est qu'elle a joué un rôle central dans notre vie économique et sociale. Le Yearly se veut aussi un aide-mémoire. Cette année surtout, il est nécessaire d'évoquer les différents événements qui ont intéressé les Jordaniens avant que la crise n'éclate et ne les éclipse. Il faut rappeler par exemple que des athlètes qui ont participé en Ecosse en juin dernier aux Jeux internationaux d'athlétisme pour handicapés ont rapporté à la Jordanie six médailles d'or et huit d'argent. Sans cette secousse de mémoire, un tel succès serait perdu.

LJ: Politique. Sport. A quels autres sujets faut-il s'attendre?

KK: A la science, entre autres. Sous la rubrique V.I.P. (Very Interesting Person), ma collègue Lina Muasher s'entretiendra avec le professeur Edward Whiter, l'homme de la NASA qui a lancé le télescope spatial Hubble. Il parlera de l'impératif de trouver de nouveaux lieux d'habitation en dehors de notre planète pour que la race humaine puisse ultérieurement survivre.

LJ: Menaces de guerre. Fin de l'humanité. N'estime-t-elle pas que le ton de cette édition est un peu apocalyptique?

KK: Le Jordan Weekly tout comme le Yearly ne représentent que ce qui est en train de se passer. Quand j'ai commencé en 1984, les événements à illustrer étaient pour la plupart culturels. En fait, au début des années 1980 —une période de prospérité— les Jordaniens se rendaient beaucoup aux concerts et au théâtre. Depuis 1987 et le début de nos ennuis financiers, le magazine s'est tourné vers les thèmes économiques. L'ensemble est dicté par les préoccupations du pays, aujourd'hui la politique. Trouvez-moi le Jordanien qui a réussi à échapper aux répercussions de la crise du Golfe. Qu'on le veuille ou non, elle nous imprègne tous jusqu'à la moelle.

LJ: Quelle est la différence entre son émission et un journal d'actualité?

KK: Notre travail —le mien et celui de mon équipe, Nur Sati et Lina Muasher— est de chercher dans les cadres sociaux et économiques du pays les éléments importants, au-delà des titres de l'actualité. Un jour, par exemple, dans une conférence de médecins, j'ai découvert qu'un docteur jordanien (Zeid Kilani) se livrait à des expériences de bébés-épongeuses. Ce fait n'avait été mentionné nulle part dans la presse, ni même dans les communiqués du département des relations publiques.

LJ: Cherche-t-elle toujours les scoop?

KK: Le reportage sensationnel ne m'intéresse pas: ce que je tâche de trouver, ce sont des sujets importants et émouvants. L'exemple des bébés-épongeuses révèle que la Jordanie est consciente des progrès de la science et y prend part. Voilà qui donne à cette information toute son importance. J'aimerais aussi voir parler d'une expérience inoubliable que j'ai vécue avec une handicapée mentale. Qui aurait pensé que cette malheureuse aurait la capacité de s'entretenir presque comme une personne normale? Au lieu de m'adresser aux médecins de la conférence, je me suis intéressée à la patiente. Miracle, elle m'a répondu. En anglais, qui plus est! Un tel fait peut changer l'attitude de beaucoup d'auditeurs, au bénéfice de ces infortunés.

LJ: Quel est son genre d'interview préféré? Studio, terrain ou téléphone?

KK: Rien ne remplace l'entretien sur le terrain. Mon hôte se trouve dans l'environnement qui lui est propre. Plus à l'aise, il répond avec beaucoup plus de souplesse. Et de mon point de vue, ce cadre m'inspire toujours des questions auxquelles je n'aurais pas pensé. Mais entre l'entretien téléphonique et celui en studio, je préfère mille fois ce dernier. Même si le cadre technique est un peu inhibant, il me reste l'atout d'être face à face avec mon interlocuteur. Le contact par téléphone ne marche bien que dans le cas où l'on se connaît déjà depuis longtemps.

LJ: De quelles interviews garde-t-elle le meilleur souvenir?

KK: Cela ne m'arrive pas souvent, mais parfois je me trouve en face d'une personne qui représente pour moi un défi intellectuel par la maîtrise qu'elle a de son sujet (arts, sciences, économie, n'importe) et par son élocution. Je me sens alors contrainte d'aller de pair avec cette personne, de prendre les devants si j'y parviens, pour trouver des questions qui peuvent stimuler cette intelligence. Ces expériences m'enthousiasment beaucoup et je souhaite qu'elles se renouvellent.

Propos recueillis par Sami Kamal

TELEVISION

DIMANCHE

17h30 - "J'ai rencontré le père Noël". Film de Noël pour les enfants.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Carnet de notes. Extraits de musique classique.

LUNDI

18h00 - L'oiseau des mers. Dessin animé.
18h10 - Denver le dernier dinosaure. Dessin animé.
18h35 - Aventure Voyage. Magazine de l'aventure.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Magazine sportif hebdomadaire.

MARDI

18h00 - "Elle sous la neige", film de Noël pour les enfants.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - "Aujourd'hui en Jordanie". Magazine local préparé et présenté par Saleh Madi.

MERCREDI

18h00 - "Le vieillissement" épisode de la série documentaire «Destination Santé».
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Sélection de variétés françaises.

JEUDI

18h00 - L'oiseau des mers. Dessin animé.
18h15 - Snorky. Dessin animé.
18h35 - Splendeur sauvage. Documentaire sur la vie des animaux.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Reportage d'actualité.

VENREDI

17h30 - Film.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Histoire de l'art. Série documentaire.

SAMEDI

18h00 - Les clés de Fort Boyard. Course au trésor exigeant des candidats courageux physiques et bonne culture générale.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Aujourd'hui en France. Magazine culturel français.

CINEMA

Lang. Dans le cadre du festival Fritz Lang, présenté par Sami Kamal, l'Institut Goethe propose l'un des plus grands films du cinéaste en scène expressionniste allemand. Tourné en noir et blanc en 1931, «M. le Maudit» («M. eine Stadt sucht den Mörder») raconte l'histoire d'un pauvre fou tueur d'enfants, qui réussit à échapper à la police mais est entraîné par son malheur par une bande de truands. Une des scènes les plus fortes du film est la parodie de procès que la police organise contre un «délinquant» désorienté, formidablement incarné par Peter Lorre. Le film est présenté en allemand avec un sous-titrage en allemand. Institut Goethe le samedi 29 décembre à 20h.

EN BRIEF

Enfin! Après sept semaines d'intenses tractations, le Conseil de Sécurité a adopté jeudi une déclaration présidentielle, non contraignante, qui évoque pour la première fois la tenue d'une conférence internationale de paix sur le Moyen-Orient. Les membres du Conseil international de paix sur le Moyen-Orient, devraient considérer que sa convocation «au moment approprié», devrait faciliter les efforts visant à parvenir à un règlement négocié du conflit arabo-israélien. Simultanément, le Conseil de Sécurité a adopté à l'unanimité la résolution 681 qui «déclare» la décision prise par Israël de procéder de nouveau à l'expulsion de civils palestiniens des territoires occupés.

Mitterrand. Le président français François Mitterrand, estimant qu'il «est encore possible» de parvenir à une solution pacifique pour sortir de la crise du Golfe, a dressé jeudi les grandes lignes d'un scénario axé sur l'évacuation totale du Koweït par l'Irak mais assorti de garanties pour Bagdad et l'ensemble de la région. Ces garanties consistent notamment à assurer Bagdad qu'il n'est pas question de conquérir l'Irak ou de détruire sa puissance militaire, «objectifs qui se trouvent dans l'arrière-cerveau d'un certain nombre de puissances».

Liban. Le président Hélios Hraoui a chargé jeudi soir M. Omar Karamé de former un gouvernement d'unité nationale, qui doit regrouper les protagonistes de la guerre du Liban. La désignation attendue de M. Karamé, avocat sunnite de 55 ans et frère du Premier ministre assassiné en 1987 Rachid Karamé, a conclu une journée-marathon de consultations entre le président Hraoui et 49 des 67 députés en fonction. L'ancien Premier ministre Salim Hoss avait présenté mercredi la démission de son gouvernement, artisan durant treize mois d'un début de normalisation dans le pays.

Chevernadze. Le ministre soviétique des Affaires Etrangères, Edouard Chevernadze a présenté jeudi au Congrès du gouvernement devant le Congrès des députés, pour protester contre «la attitude qui approche», non sans avoir remercié son «ami» Mikhail Gorbatchev. Ce dernier a pour sa part déclaré que cette démission était «une surprise complète» tout en la condamnant. «Il ne faut pas tomber dans la panique et surtout pas dans l'hystérie», a-t-il dit.

Ministre. Michel Delebarre, ancien ministre français de l'Équipement, a été nommé mercredi ministre d'Etat chargé de la ville. La création de ce ministère avait été annoncée par le président François Mitterrand il y a quelques semaines, après les crises qui avaient secoué plusieurs banlieues des grandes villes du pays. M. Delebarre est remplacé dans ses précédentes fonctions par Louis Besson. Ce dernier n'est pas remplacé à son ancien poste de ministre délégué à l'Équipement.

Sans blague!

Les priorités d'Aristote

A ce point, Aristote s'arrête un moment, puis ajoute solennellement:

«Comme président des Etats-Unis, vous êtes dans la situation de l'actuel Empereur du monde. Si vous voulez que notre pays garde la tête de cet empire, vous devez éviter les erreurs des autres empereurs.»

Malgré les reproches d'Aristote, l'amour propre de Bush fut agréablement caressé: être Empereur du monde n'était pas peu! C'était certainement mieux que d'être champion du monde de golf ou de tennis. C'était même plus flatteur que de remporter le titre de Miss Univers.

«Mais comment demeurer Empereur du monde, comme vous dites, si je ne commence pas par être réélu dans deux ans?»

«L'important M. le président n'est pas tellement que vous soyez réélu, mais plutôt que vous commenciez au plus vite à instituer le nouvel ordre mondial. Vous devrez alors bien plus qu'un simple président des Etats-Unis.»

«Votre fameux projet de gouvernement mondial!»

«M. le président, l'Histoire nous apprend que les groupements humains ont évolué au fil du temps, et pratiquement de la même façon partout dans le monde, malgré l'appartenance, et à l'échelle d'empires éphémères dus à la folie des grandeurs et aux ambitions démesurées de certains individus: les familles se sont réunies en clans et ceux-ci se sont rassemblés pour créer les cités-Etats, qui, à leur tour finirent par constituer les Etats modernes. Récemment, les Etats eux-mêmes ont commencé à se rassembler en groupements économiques géants. La dernière étape de l'évolution inéluctable des groupements humains est naturellement le passage à l'Histoire en devenant le premier à l'instaurer.»

«Et les rivalités ethniques, religieuses, économiques et idéologiques?»

«L'égalité et la justice les supprimeront.»

«Votre naïveté m'amuse Aristote. Sachez que le monde comprend une nuée de groupes d'influence dont le seul but est de faire profiter leurs membres au dépens de tous les autres humains: sionistes, franc-maçons, lobbies, sectes religieuses, partis politiques, clubs, syndicats, nations et j'en passe! L'égalité et la justice ne sont donc que des concepts théoriques que l'homme invoque pour mieux défendre ses intérêts propres ou les privilèges du groupe auquel il appartient.»

«Eh bien non, M. le président! L'égalité et la justice sont des sentiments innés chez les hommes. Seuls la peur et le besoin de sécurité ont donné lieu à la prolifération de ce que vous appelez groupes d'influence. Il est vrai que certains esprits malfaisants ont fini par donner à certains de ces groupes des buts égoïstes et immoraux et continuent à le faire, mais mis à part les membres des bandes de crime organisé, la majorité des affiliés aux différents groupes sont de bonne foi: ils pensent qu'en militant pour leur groupe ils défendent de nobles causes.»

«N'empêche que de nombreux groupes s'opposent farouchement à votre projet de gouvernement mondial!»

«Si vous faites vite, ils n'arriveront pas à comprendre. Au contraire, la plupart d'entre eux vous soutiendront pensant pouvoir étendre leurs activités et leur influence à travers ce nouvel ordre mondial!»

«Et l'opinion publique?»

«Elle ne pourra que s'emballer pour votre projet. Personne n'ose, publiquement au moins, montrer la moindre opposition aux principes de droit et de justice!»

«Et les grandes puissances?»

«Avec le jeune protégé de Maggie au pouvoir, la Grande-Bretagne vous suivra les yeux fermés; la France suivra aussi avec enthousiasme, à condition toutefois que vous donniez à Mitterrand la satisfaction de co-participer votre projet; quant à la Chine et à l'URSS, elles trouveront la planche de salut qui les sortira des marasmes intérieurs dans lesquels ces deux empires sont en train de mariner ou même de sombrer.»

«Croyez-vous qu'alors je pourrai être réélu à la Maison-Blanche?»

«Vous n'aurez plus besoin, M. le président, d'être réélu à la Maison-Blanche. Tous les peuples du globe vous plébisciteront et vous «forceront» à présider le premier gouvernement mondial. Votre mandat pourra alors durer très, très longtemps. Certainement plus de quatre ans!»

«Merci Aristote. Au revoir.»

Bush restait songeur. Il voyait défiler devant lui des millions de jeunes: des Chinois, des Indiens, des Africains, des Arabes et d'autres. Tous portaient des drapeaux américains et des banderoles saluant le «Grand Bush». Des majorettes précédaient naturellement la marche!

Sabri Farah

Repas de Noël et du réveillon

La grande saga du foie gras

Rares sont les Français qui conçoivent un repas de Noël ou du jour de l'An qui ne commencerait pas par des toasts de foie gras. La France est le premier producteur et le premier exportateur de ce produit étrange, unique en son genre. Il doit sa couleur subtile (mélange de gris, de beige et de rose), sa texture unique (à mi-chemin entre le beurre et le pâté) et son goût indescriptible, à une nourriture forcée et disproportionnée de l'oie ou du canard, qui provoque une hypertrophie et un changement de structure de son foie. Loin d'être une invention française et récente, il semble que l'idée du gavage des oies soit née il y a environ 4.500 ans... en Egypte.

Oies et canards ne sont certainement encore que des oiseaux sauvages, un gibier abondant et appréciable, quand l'homme les domestique sur les parois de la grotte de Lascaux, dans le canton de la Barthe-de-Nestle, quelques millénaires avant que notre histoire commence. L'homme préhistorique subit les lois d'une nature violente, dont il ne sait pas se protéger. Mais il observe et apprend, et le temps vient où il devine à quel moment, dans le rythme des saisons, il faut attraper les oies et les canards. Quand les jours décroissent, les oiseaux, eux, d'instinct, se gorgent, s'empressent de tout ce qu'ils trouvent de consistant: grains farineux, fruits à maturité, poissons gras, aliments qui seront stockés dans leur corps. Ces réserves les aident à rejoindre les régions aux hivers plus cléments.

Dans la tribu de celui qui sculpta ces pièces d'os et de bois exposées au musée de l'Oie, à Thiviers en Périgord, ignore-t-on encore que ces oiseaux migrateurs s'enrichissent d'eux-mêmes en prévision de leurs longs voyages? Des millénaires s'écouleront de la chasse à la capture, de la capture à l'élevage et à l'engraissement provoqué. Plus tard, sur les bords du Nil, l'oie est même hissée au rang des animaux sacrés. On la vénère: Pharaon est le soleil, son âme est une oie, car «l'oie est le soleil sorti de l'œuf primordial», l'intermédiaire entre la terre et le ciel, entre la vie ici-bas et la vie éternelle. Mais l'Egypte des pharaons n'a pas que des préoccupations métaphysiques. Oies et canards sont élevés d'abord pour garnir les tables des banquets. On les voit, plumées, la tête pendante, le bec vers le bas, déposés sur des montagnes de nourriture les plus variées.

La découverte la plus sensationnelle pour nous fut celle de la Ve dynastie (environ 2.500 ans av. J.-C.) à Saqqarah. Ici, on compte les oies qui avancent en troupeaux serrés. Des paniers d'osiers émergent sous et sous. Là une scène étrange attire notre attention: des serviteurs accroupis préparent une pâte, en font des boulettes qu'ils roulent entre leurs mains et qu'ils alignent sur des coupes élégantes et sophistiquées. Ces galettes sont-elles destinées à des invités? à des enfants royaux? Pas du tout. La bande dessinée antique qui orne les murs du tombeau continue. Et qui voyons nous venir, tendant le bec, soulevant leurs ailes pour s'élever? Une myriade d'oies et de canards que les serviteurs prennent à tour de rôle par le cou et nourrissent un à un de ces galettes. Le jabot garni, nos volatiles vont se désaltérer dans des coupes dispersées çà et là. Ainsi est décrite la

première scène connue de gavage de palmipèdes. Peut-on imaginer qu'on ait engraisé des oies et des canards tout au long des dynasties pharaoniques sans avoir remarqué que le foie grossissait, sans avoir découvert ses immenses qualités gustatives, sans les avoir fait connaître aux plus riches, aux plus puissants, donc à la cour de Pharaon?

La technique du gavage va traverser les siècles, mais ce n'est pas l'écriture des Égyptiens, cachée et devenue illisible qui le permettra. Elle va prendre un autre chemin, et accomplir un long voyage. Moïse ramène les Hébreux condamnés à l'esclavage. Parmi ces hommes marchent les éleveurs qui savent gaver. Après les «cent quarante années» passées dans le désert, l'engraissement de la volaille est pratiqué en Palestine où «coulent les ruisseaux de lait et de miel». Il y est encore exercé aujourd'hui...

Avec la dispersion du peuple hébreu, l'art de gaver les oies apparaît partout où s'installent les juifs: Europe centrale, Rome, Carthage... Plus tard, l'Occident, l'Alsace. Dans le «Kochbuch» de Rumpolt, livre de cuisine édité à Francfort en 1581, nous pouvons lire: «J'ai vu l'oie d'une oie que les juifs de Bohême engraisaient et qui pesait un peu plus de trois livres. On peut aussi en faire une puree...»

Le judaïsme est sans doute la religion qui comporte le plus d'interdits alimentaires et le plus de règles codifiant la manière de se nourrir. Le porc est honni. L'abattage doit s'exercer avec le minimum de souffrance pour les animaux. De ce point de vue, seul l'égorgement est autorisé. Enfin, la viande ne peut être frite ou conservée que dans l'huile ou la graisse de certains animaux ne produisant pas de lait: l'oie par exemple.

L'oie est connue des Grecs. La sculpture «L'enfant à l'oie» dont une réplique se trouve au musée du Louvre, est d'un artiste grec du III^e siècle av. J.C. Nous avons la certitude que les Grecs gavaient les oies... Epigène, auteur comique, craint qu'on le prenne pour le «mourir comme une oie qu'on engraisse». La Fontaine, plus tard, imitera Esoppe. Mais celui-ci n'a jamais écrit l'histoire d'une poule aux œufs d'or. Il s'agissait d'une oie aux œufs d'or.

Les Romains apprennent tout des peuples qu'ils vainquent, dit-on. L'art de se nourrir suit l'histoire de l'Empire, et s'enrichit de ses conquêtes. Le délire des cuisiniers romains n'a pas de limite. Il n'est donc pas étonnant qu'ils soient allés emprunter aux Grecs la recette du foie gras. Hubert Montellbet, dans «Nécropolis» raconte: «On obtenait des foies énormes et tendres en gavant les volatiles avec une pâte à base de figues. Les foies étaient finalement mis à mariner et à gonfler dans du lait additionné de miel. Le foie gras ainsi traité était vite devenu le symbole du luxe culinaire. Alors que le foie se disait normalement «jeune» en latin, l'habitude se prenait déjà d'appeler «ficatum» le foie gras, en raison des figues utilisées pour le gavage...»

L'un de ces Romains fous de gourmandises, Apicius, naquit aux environs de l'an 25 av. J.C. Il faisait engraisser les oies avec des figues sèches, et les tuait en leur donnant à boire du vin miellé. Cinq cents recettes sont décrites dans son «Art culinaire». Il s'empoisonna en apprenant qu'il ne lui restait plus pour toute fortune que dix millions de sesterces, et qu'il lui faudrait réduire son train de vie!

Des figures gavaient les oies romaines. Les Français, eux aussi, ont voulu gaver les canards avec des figues. Des canards pour des raisons pratiques alors que, semble-t-il, les Romains n'engraissaient que des oies, mais le résultat est le même quant aux questions que nous posons et que voici: le foie prend-il un volume important? Le foie de l'animal gavé aux figues arrive-t-il à cette teinte blonde que nous lui connaissons aujourd'hui avec le maïs? A préparation identique, le goût du foie gras de canard gavé aux figues est-il le même que celui du foie gras de canard gavé au maïs?

Parmi ses cent cinquante canards à gaver, un fermier de Castepoux, en Béarn, en parqua deux qui ne mangèrent que des figues sèches, environ une dizaine de kilos au lieu de dix kilos de maïs qui distribués à tous leurs congénères. Au bout de deux semaines, nos deux canards étaient à point, «jolies», comparables aux cent quarante huit confrères gavés au maïs. Leur foie mis en conserve fut servi au milieu d'autres foies gras de canard, sans mention qui puisse distinguer une particularité de gavage ni d'origine, à une quinzaine de dégustateurs.

Sa tranche fit sensation: les invités: le légal, beige-gris du pourtour laissait découvrir une tranche beige rose uniforme, une texture ferme et douce très engageante. Aucune différence avec ce que nous connaissons du foie gras traditionnel, de ferme, ne laissa supposer qu'il s'agissait d'un foie gras de canard gavé aux figues! Le «ficatum» était bien l'équivalent de notre foie gras.

L'art d'engraissement et celui de manger du foie gras semblent disparaître avec la fin de l'Empire romain. On a prétendu que les oies ont digéré tranquillement d'Antilles à Louis XIV... En réalité, un faisceau d'indices nous porte à croire que la tradition du gavage, introduite par les Romains, ne s'est jamais perdue tout au long des siècles. L'antiquité tardive, l'Égypte et le V^e siècle av. J.C. ont encore des Romains construisant des villas d'un grand luxe sur les bords de l'Adour et ailleurs. Comme de riches patriciens, ils veulent recréer ici et là le meilleur de ce qu'ils connaissent à Rome. Ils ne tardent pas sans doute à se rendre compte que dans les régions de France, il pleut très froid en hiver et il pleut beaucoup au printemps. Ils comprennent donc pourquoi tant d'oies étaient élevées en Gaule: le climat leur convenait parfaitement. Ils remarquèrent aussi que les canards adoraient ce coin-ci, et ils l'appellèrent «Aquitania» ou «Pays des canards».

Ils firent appliquer aux oies donc pas étonnant qu'ils soient allés emprunter aux Grecs la recette du foie gras. Hubert Montellbet, dans «Nécropolis» raconte: «On obtenait des foies énormes et tendres en gavant les volatiles avec une pâte à base de figues. Les foies étaient finalement mis à mariner et à gonfler dans du lait additionné de miel. Le foie gras ainsi traité était vite devenu le symbole du luxe culinaire. Alors que le foie se disait normalement «jeune» en latin, l'habitude se prenait déjà d'appeler «ficatum» le foie gras, en raison des figues utilisées pour le gavage...»

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puisé aux canards le traitement connu à Rome, magèrent le foie gras mêlé de miel et de lait et commandèrent aux artistes de représenter le dieu responsable de tant d'arrosages naturels: le dieu Océan, sorte de Père de toutes les eaux, puisque tous nos gaves, nos torrents, nos ruisseaux, nos fleuves sont ses enfants. Bientôt, l'Eglise se crée et s'organise. Nos romains sont souvent aussi ces premiers Chrétiens, qui bâtissent chapelles et légendes. Un document du Vatican cite Gratus Episcopus, premier évêque connu de la ville d'Oléron (Béarn), qui se rendit au concile d'Agde en 506. Son nom est attaché à celui du «gât», du canard. Pourquoi? Oléron est la déformation du mot ibère «lluro», ou «cité des eaux». Les canards séjournaient dans les marécages qui entouraient la ville. Encourageaient-ils leur élevage pour les distribuer aux plus démunis?

A Morlaix, le portail roman de l'ancienne cathédrale Sainte-Foy présente les vieillards de l'Apocalypse, les «sages de la vie quotidienne». Et... une kyrielle d'oies qui furent restaurées au XIX^e siècle. Le canard ne devient pas un animal sacré comme l'oie des Égyptiens et celle des Romains, mais il mérite, avec le poisson, de figurer chez nous sur les édifices du culte. Influence romaine qui n'a pu tomber en désuétude, apport des coutumes juives, besoin constant de restaurer la provision, gourmandise des prélats... et des autres, tout concourt à nous persuader que, dès l'aube de notre ère, et durant tout le Moyen-Âge, on engraisse auques et guits dans le grand Sud-Ouest de la France.

Toutefois, l'empreinte de la patte palmée n'indique pas seulement le passage des oiseaux d'eau. Victime de l'irrationnel, l'homme interprète les signes afin de ne pas trop souffrir du combat que se livrent les forces du bien et celles du mal. Il faut attirer les uns, détourner les autres. Tantôt on lui prête des pouvoirs surnaturels, on le craint, on cherche à lui plaire. Tantôt on voit en lui le responsable des maux et des maladies, et ce fil du diable est en danger d'être brisé. Il vaut donc mieux cacher ses pieds palmés.

Ainsi aurait existé une belle fille qui ne voulait jamais montrer ses pieds. Son mari, un jeune roi wisigoth très puissant, ne put la déchausser la nuit de ses nocces, ni les nuits suivantes. Peu à peu, voyant que son épouse respectait son secret, la jeune reine prit confiance, et l'habitude de dormir pieds nus. Elle quittait ses chaussures dès que la bougie était éteinte. Avec le temps, la curiosité du roi ne s'émoussait pas. Un soir, il versa une mince couche de sable au fond du lit et attendit amoureusement la reine. Le lendemain matin, il vit la trace des pieds palmés de sa jeune épouse! Il s'agissait de la reine Frédégonde. «Pé d'anques», qui signifiait en langue d'oc: pied d'oie.

Une reine wisigothe aux pieds d'oie? Avec elle commence la sombre histoire des cagots du Sud-ouest. Qui étaient ces parias condamnés à vivre à l'écart des villages, à entrer dans les églises par une petite porte latérale? Ces «intouchables» étaient-ils des lépreux? Les descendants des prisonniers maures récemment convertis au christianisme? Les descendants des Goths vaincus? Y aurait-il parmi eux, à cause des mariages consanguins auxquels ils étaient condamnés, plus d'enfants naissant les pieds palmés?

Toutes sortes d'hypothèses ont été avancées. Il paraît tout de même certain qu'ils durent

Le grand coup de publicité va

Fabrication

Conserve de foie gras au naturel en terrine. Assaisonner le foie gras de sel épicé: le faire macérer au cognac pendant quelques heures. L'éponger. Le cuire doucement, c'est à dire le faire pocher dans de la graisse d'oie clarifiée. Egoutter le foie, le mettre dans une terrine ronde où il contiendra presque juste. Le couvrir de graisse d'oie. Faire bien refroidir. Couler alors sur cette graisse une couche légère de saindoux fondu. Faire refroidir. Mettre le couvercle sur la terrine. Coller sur le bord de cette terrine une bande de papier d'étain. Ainsi préparé et tenu dans un endroit frais et non humide, le foie peut se conserver fort longtemps.

Conserve de foie gras au naturel en boîtes. Mettre dans des boîtes en fer blanc ovales des foies gras, choisis bien fermes, que l'on aura assaisonnés et fait masser pendant deux heures avec du cognac. Ajouter un peu de graisse d'oie dans les boîtes. Les serrer. Faire cuire au bain marie à ébullition non interrompue pendant une heure et demie pour les boîtes d'un kilo, et une heure pour les boîtes de 500 grammes. Egoutter les boîtes. Les faire refroidir. Les bien essuyer et les conserver dans un lieu frais et sec.

Terrine de foie gras truffé à la façon périgourdine. Faire dégorger à l'eau froide pendant toute une nuit, un gros foie gras choisi bien ferme, l'éponger et l'éponger. Faire sur les lobes du foie quelques incisions et mettre sur chacune de ces fentes un morceau de truffe. Saler le foie et l'épicer. Le mettre dans une terrine, dont on aura garni le fond et les parois de tranches minces de lard gras frais. Appuyer sur le foie pour qu'il soit bien tassé dans le récipient. Le recouvrir d'une couche mince de viande de porc hachée, gras et maigre, et assaisonner congruement. Arroser de quelques cuillerées de bonne eau de vie et mettre sur le tout un peu de graisse d'oie fondue tiède. Fermer la terrine et en luter les bords avec une bande de pâte faite de farine et d'eau. Mettre la terrine dans une plaque à moitié pleine d'eau chaude. Cuire au four à bonne chaleur régulière pendant une heure environ. Faire bien refroidir sous presse légère. Lorsque le foie est bien refroidi, couler dessus quelques cuillerées de graisse d'oie et, lorsque cette graisse est bien figée, ajouter une peu de saindoux fondu. Couvrir la terrine: coller une bande de papier d'étain sur les bords. Conserver dans un endroit frais et non humide.

in Nouveau Larousse gastronomique, par Prosper Montagné, revu par Robert J. Courcier.

porter cousue sous leur vêtement, l'empreinte infamante de la patte de canard afin qu'on les reconnaisse et qu'on les évite!

Un coup de pub qui venait d'Alsace

Oies et canards sont-ils donc devenus des oiseaux de malheur? Non, puisque en même temps naissent le jeu de l'oie et les légendes de Ma Mère l'Oye. Il est vrai que l'un a une interprétation ésotérique, et l'autre des origines douteuses: Ma Mère l'Oye serait une sorcière voyageant non pas sur un balai, mais sur le cou d'une oie! Mais laissons là l'ésotérisme et revenons sur terre. Mais et foie gras sont aujourd'hui aussi étroitement associés que foie et figures l'étaient chez les Romains. D'où vient donc cette

Christophe Colomb parle du maïs: «sorte de graine qui forme un épi comme un fusil, et que j'ai apportée en Castille où il y en a déjà beaucoup». Il a rapporté cette graine des ses premières expéditions en 1493 ou 1496. Le maïs pousse en Espagne à la fin du XV^e siècle, et avec un tel succès qu'il se répand aussitôt que deux autres nouveautés ramenées du Nouveau Monde: le tabac et la syphilis! Moins de trente ans après son entrée en Espagne, le maïs est mentionné dans le Béarn, dans un texte qui date de 1523. Nouvelle culture, elle perturbe les privilèges qui freinent son expansion, puisqu'elle échappe à la dîme levée par le clergé, et elle n'est pas partagée avantageusement pour le propriétaire dans le métayage.

Le foie aussi existe, il est très bon, meilleur que tout sans doute, mais sa mode n'est pas imposée. Comme la coutume d'engraissement est ancienne et n'est pas seulement le privilège des riches, c'est un plat ordinaire. Henri IV ne le mentionne dans ses lettres que lorsqu'il en est privé! Et met à la mode le confit d'oie.

Mais le royaume de France n'est pas seul à gaver ses oies... Le livre de Rumpolt publié au XVI^e siècle raconte comment les Juifs de Hongrie obtiennent, en gorgant leurs oies, des foies dont la grosseur stupéfiante.

Une vieille dame hongroise nous raconte avec modestie et naturel: «Vous savez, le foie cuisait, on le mettait dans un pot, on le couvrait de graisse et on le laissait au frais... Quand nous portions pour l'école, on ne nous donnait pas de pain avec du beurre mais on écrasait le foie tendre sur le pain. Dans le pot, on cachait à nouveau le foie sous la graisse afin qu'il dure jusqu'au lendemain, et quelques jours ainsi... C'était notre beurre, c'est tout. On ne trouvait pas que c'était rare.»

Au XVIII^e siècle, les livres de cuisine, «Le cuisinier royal et bourgeois», «Le nouveau cuisinier français», «La cuisinière bourgeoise», «Le cuisinier instruit», décrivent enfin des préparations de «foie gras» en ragout, en crêpe, à la cendre, en attelettes (brochettes), avec des ris de veau. Le foie gras entre même dans les truffes servies sous le nom de «truffes en point»! Mais les meilleurs sont ceux de chapons, de poulardes et de poulets. Avec ces foies-là, sont confectionnés ce qu'on appelle les premiers «pâtés de Périgueux».

Le grand coup de publicité va

cependant venir de l'Alsace et le succès de l'invention et de l'inventeur va embrouiller beaucoup l'histoire du foie gras. Dès le XVI^e siècle, en Alsace, on élève des oies en grand nombre. La preuve en est la quantité d'ordonnances et de règlements tendant à limiter les perturbations qu'elles provoquent: tapage nocturne, dégâts dans les champs, les prés et les jardins. A aucun moment, dans les textes, il n'est encore question de foie gras.

Entre 1770 et 1780, Jean-Pierre Classe, le cuisinier du gouverneur d'Alsace, le maréchal de Contades, réalise un pâté qu'il s'empresse d'appeler «pâté à la Contades», en croûte et non truffé, à base de foie d'Alsace. Le maréchal de Contades est émerveillé et désire aussitôt faire connaître les plaisirs de ce pâté au roi Louis XIV. Reconnaissant, le roi lui octroie une lettre en faveur de vingt-cinq patentes au cuisinier. Ainsi, ce dernier s'établit à Strasbourg: voilà l'origine des foies gras d'Alsace.

Cette histoire se conta et se raconte, et les Alsaciens passèrent très vite pour ceux qui avaient «redécouvert» le foie gras. Mais les Périgourdins n'étaient pas d'accord. On trouve dans les archives du département l'expression de leur mécontentement, dès l'époque de la Révolution: «Périgueux. Les patisseries de cette ville ne sont pas content que l'on attribue l'invention des foies gras au seul génie gastronomique alsacien. Ils rétorquent que l'un de leurs plus fameux cuisiniers, Villereymer de la Gâtine, ambassadeur par Sa Majesté Louis XV, a réussi à faire connaître dans la France entière les spécialités de cette province. Au nombre, des pâtés de foie gras d'oie, meilleurs que ceux de Strasbourg, puisqu'ils allient à leurs qualités intrinsèques et à leur fondant le parfum délicat et incomparable de la truffe, fleur du Périgord.»

Lorsqu'il importe d'être chauvin

Ainsi le pâté qui associe foie gras, chair de porc et épices est né sans truffes en Alsace, avec truffes en Périgord, peut-être dès le début du XVIII^e siècle. Aujourd'hui, les cuisiniers du sud de la Gironne considèrent comme une aberration culinaire d'entourer le foie gras d'oie ou de canard d'une farce de porc.

Sous la Révolution, l'oie devient l'emblème des plaisirs ludiques. Il est amusant de regarder les oies du jeu de l'oie de 1791. Toutes les neuf cases, on les retrouve: elles symbolisent les parlements des villes de province! Bavardage, cacardage, beaucoup de bruit pour rien... Aujourd'hui, le jeu de l'oie est entré dans tous les foyers.

A d'autres titres, Nicolas Appert (1749-1841) aussi. L'invention qui a le plus servi la valorisation du foie gras est sans nul doute la sienne. Il a consacré sa vie à améliorer son procédé de conservation des aliments par la chaleur. Son premier livre, «Le Livre de tous les ménages ou l'Art de conserver pendant plusieurs années toutes les substances animales et végétales», parut en 1790.

Déjà la fin du XIX^e siècle, et jusque'en 1930, les jeunes gens parcourent à vélo a campagne pour aller faire soudre les boîtes. Les énormes lessiveuses



Pas de repas de Noël ou du jour de l'An sans des toasts de foie gras.

Conception

Un jour que les vaches de l'Olympe s'étaient égarées parce que les Dieux comme à l'accoutumée folâtraient de leur côté, elles arrivèrent dans une région sans herbe, rocailleuse, sinistre. Enchaînées à un rocher, un certain Prométhée se faisait dévorer le foie par un vautour.

Assouffies, les vaches burent le sang qui coulait de la blessure et un peu plus tard, en frottant sous de la mousse, elles se régalaient de quelques champignons.

Retrouvées par Hermès, elles furent traitées comme à l'habitude pour faire du beurre avec leur lait. Quelques temps plus tard, Hermès fit une halte à Rome pour reprendre des forces en grignotant une tartine beurrée qu'il fit goûter à un romain curieux et gourmand.

-Mais de quoi est-ce fait ce beurre? demanda le Romain.
-De foie et de champignons, répondit Hermès.
-De quel foie?
-D'Homme! Mais si tu voulais en faire toi aussi tu pourrais utiliser le foie des oies du Capitole.
Le foie gras était né!

Noël Favrelière

devenaient les ancêtres de l'autocave. Peu à peu, le foie gras des maîtresses de maison du Sud-Ouest va quitter les pots de graisse et trouver sa place dans ces boîtes que l'on porte à des forgerons spécialisés pour qu'ils soudent le couvercle.

La chance d'être en pays mouillé

Voici les précieuses boîtes rangées dans les caves à côté des vins qui mûrissent. Mûrissant elles-mêmes, puisque l'habitude campagnarde sera de garder longtemps ces boîtes-là, de les faire attendre et de faire attendre la famille. On le sait par tradition, l'attente attise le désir! Les gastronomes redécouvrent les qualités gustatives de ce foie gras, convenablement apertisé qui se bonifie au fil du temps dans les caves à vin. D'où l'idée de ce foie gras à millésimer. S'il est possible de suivre à peu près les traces des oiseaux gavés à travers le temps, ces traces semblent aujourd'hui se disperser dans beaucoup de directions.

Qu'en est-il de cette production qui apparaît ici, là et ailleurs?

Communiqué décrit ainsi le Périgourdin: «Un vrai Français puisqu'il aime à se dénigrer lui-même.» C'est avec consternation que le Gascon qui ne vit pas luxueusement de l'élevage ou de l'engraissement apprend qu'aujourd'hui on gave au Mexique, au Japon, en Tunisie, en Corée ou en Chine. Habitué à entendre que les Français sont toujours en retard et «font tout plus mal que les autres», sans le vin peut-être, il ne doute pas de ce qu'on lui affirme, et aurait tendance à se laisser décourager.

Une petite mise au point s'impose donc...

Pour le moment, en matière de foie gras, la France garde la première place dans presque tous les domaines: premier pays producteur, avec environ quatre mille tonnes; premier pays consommateur; premier pays exportateur de foie gras transformé (conserves, pâtés).

Mais nous sommes aussi les premiers importateurs! La Hongrie nous a vendu mille cinq cents tonnes de foie gras en 1988 et commence à commercialiser des conserves. Il ne faut pas être chauvin, mais il faut le dire: le meilleur foie gras est français... Notre tradition et notre savoir-faire sont imbattables. Un Japonais éclaterait de rire si on lui assurait, avec ce ton docte et sérieux des chargés d'études, que le sushi fabriqué dans le Gers est meilleur que le sien. Quelle serait la réaction de l'Italien à qui on voudrait faire croire que les spaghetti faits en France ont un meilleur goût que ceux de son enfance? La production d'oies et de canards reste familiale. En Aquitaine, quatorze mille éleveurs sont reconnus comme producteurs de palmipèdes à foie gras. Environ trois mille d'entre eux possèdent des bâtiments spécialisés. Aucun pays au monde n'a

organisé un réseau de centres d'études et de recherches comparable à celui qui a été créé depuis quarante ans en France. Les services vétérinaires et les exigences du marché européen et international sont tels que s'améliorent sans cesse les conditions sanitaires et d'alimentation des éleveurs, le travail du gavage et la qualité du maïs, enfin les conditions d'abattage, d'éviscération et de conditionnement.

Sachons-le, l'élevage des palmipèdes en peut pas se pratiquer n'importe où. Les oiseaux d'eau, comme le maïs, ont besoin de conditions climatiques précises: Tout le monde n'a pas la chance d'habiter une région où la pluie est un élément primordial, où l'eau imbibée herbes et frondaisons au point de leur donner un couleur cabochon d'émeraude, où les nuages sont omniprésents, les arcs-en-ciel quotidiens, où il y a tant de façons de pleuvoir qu'on pourrait en écrire un livre! C'est si beau, ce pays mouillé, quand les nuages s'écartent un peu pour laisser le soleil traverser un air purifié, jouer à travers les feuillages et transformer tous nos paysages en tableaux impressionnistes. Alors, parlons de la civilisation du foie gras, qui est aussi celle du maïs, et de la pluie... Non. Ici nous ne sommes pas dans le sud-est. Nous sommes dans le Midi mouillé.

Une bavarde qui raconte les migrations de ses ancêtres

L'oie dont le nom vient du latin «avis» qui signifie oiseau, et qui fut certainement le premier oiseau domestiqué peut vivre, nous dit Buffon, jusqu'à quatre-vingts ans!

Comme ses ancêtres du Capitole, elle a un grand sens du danger et ne demande pas mieux que de monter la garde et de défendre, sifflante et menaçante, la maison ou les enfants qui la surveillent.

Bavarde? Sans doute. L'oie cacarde et le jargonne. Mais que disent-ils? Konrad Lorenz n'a pas seulement réussi à être une maman oie. Il les a écoutées, imitées jusqu'à ce qu'il ait compris l'essentiel de leurs conversations. Conversations qu'elles poursuivent depuis des millénaires. Le cacardage de l'oie serait le même que celui de l'oie sauvage habituée à donner à ses congénères des commentaires sur la migration à entreprendre, la vitesse du vol, sa direction. Les regroupements nécessaires. L'oie domestique ne sait plus voler, mais elle aurait gardé la possibilité de parler de ce vol qui lui était autrefois essentiel. Quand vient la saison du départ des oies et des canards sauvages, nos palmipèdes auraient tendance à s'agiter avec frénésie. S'ils retrouvent la liberté, au bout de quelques générations leur revient la mémoire des migrations.

Marie-Luce Cazamayas

Extrait du livre «La célébration du foie gras» qu'elle a publié aux éditions La Manufacture.



Gavage d'une oie au XIX^e siècle dans les Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

L.G.

Economy

Kuwaitis to invest \$300m in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — The finance minister of the toppled Kuwait government said Friday his country would invest more than \$300 million in Syria, which is backing multinational efforts to force Iraq out from Kuwait.

Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa Al Sabah told a news conference several projects were under discussion and are expected to be approved very soon.

The minister, who signed a \$185 million soft loan Thursday to finance a sanitation project in Damascus, said a company owned by Kuwait would be sent soon to invest in industrial, agricultural and economic projects in Syria.

He said Kuwait would also contribute towards financing a number of projects in the next three years including the expansion of Damascus' telephone network.

The Kuwait Development Fund would also extend a \$25 million loan to help small investors set up projects to contribute towards development in the country.

Madrid to expand credit line to Rabat

RABAT (R) — Spain will expand a line of credit to Morocco from \$1.3 to \$1.57 billion for the period up to the end of 1992, Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez said Friday at the end of a 24-hour visit to Morocco.

He said a project to build a pipeline carrying Algerian natural gas across Morocco to Spain would be launched in the near future. "I think it will advance very quickly," he said.

The linking of the Spanish and Moroccan electricity grids and telecommunications networks was also discussed, he added.

Spanish sources said other topics included joint ventures, particularly in sea fishing, and industrial investments in the phosphate sector, the mainstay of the Moroccan economy.

A joint declaration said they were both determined to build either a bridge or a tunnel across the Straits of Gibraltar. It also said they would pay special attention to the "human factor."

OTTAWA (R) — After seven years of relentless growth the Canadian economy is in retreat, with soaring bankruptcies and a slowing in manufacturing output, according to figures released recently.

Canadian bankruptcies rose 60 per cent in November to 6,009 from 3,763 in the same month a year ago, Canada's Consumer and Corporate Affairs Department reported.

It also said that Canada's manufacturing plant utilisation fell 1.4 per cent to 78 per cent of capacity in the third quarter.

Opposition parties and economists are increasingly worried that Canada's recession might be deeper and more prolonged than first feared.

"Why is this government waiting for this recession to get worse and worse?" opposition Liberal house leader Herb Gray asked in the House of Commons.

Canada's economy, normally powered internally by strong

consumer spending and externally by high demand for cars, resources and wheat exports, began to contract in the second quarter of this year.

Finance Minister Michael Wilson said the government will continue to work towards lowering interest rates further to spur the economy.

"We recognise that the economy is in recession and we have reduced interest rates since the spring of this year," he noted.

But the chief economist of the prestigious think tank, the Conference Board of Canada, warned that interest rates need to be reduced much more to avoid a sharp contraction.

"Without some relief on the interest rate front, I have major concerns that this recession will turn out to be much more severe than we currently expected," economist James Frank said in a Conference Board publication.

Frank said the Canadian economy has already deteriorated faster than anticipated and the

Gulf crisis was clouding the outlook. Consumer confidence is already low and the government's seven per cent consumption tax which goes into effect in January will only add to the problem.

"In our outlook, all major components of consumer spending shrink in the first quarter of 1991, except automobile spending, which increase after three quarters of decline," Frank said.

He said the government's budget deficit will mean little relief for consumers in the new budget, expected in February.

Canada's central bank has begun easing rates. Earlier this month, the Bank of Canada rate, similar to the U.S. discount rate, fell to its lowest level in nearly two years, dropping to 12.01 per cent from 12.16 per cent.

But Frank said the central bank, with its aim to eradicate inflation, probably kept rates too high for too long.

N. Zealand cuts deep into welfare spending to revitalise economy

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand's new National Party government has slashed welfare spending by 10 per cent, cutting payments to children, the ill and the unemployed to breathe life into a sickly economy.

The government in a mini-budget also announced sweeping changes to labour laws, including outlawing compulsory trade union membership, to make New Zealand business more competitive.

The package was welcomed by financial markets but denounced by the Council of Trade Unions as being anti-worker.

Unemployment, sickness and child benefits will all be cut while across-the-board family allowances will go altogether.

"Now we must confront the hard decisions that have been delayed too long," Prime Minister Jim Bolger told parliament.

"Short term sacrifices and some, major, long term adjustments are both necessary if we are to succeed in the battle for economic growth and a return to full employment," he said.

In the mini-budget, announced less than two months after sweeping to power by a landslide, the government lopped 1.28 billion dollars (\$760 million) or 10 per cent off its welfare spending for the 1991/92 financial year.

But Bolger said the state of the economy allowed no alternative.

"No commentator, of any persuasion, disputes the fact that our economy is in a deep recession, which is getting deeper every week," he declared.

Financial markets liked what they heard and two banks immediately responded with interest rate cuts.

New Zealand's economy, which has declined for decades, has been battered by soaring energy bills due to the Gulf crisis just when prices of its key agricultural exports have plunged.

The spending cuts are aimed at reining in a budget deficit which threatens to run out of control. The government hopes this will bring down interest rates which have strangled any economic recovery at birth, forcing factories to close and sending unemployment to record levels.

"At the heart of these problems is the crushing burden of government spending," said Finance Minister, Ruth Richardson.

"The continuing increase in the size of the state has resulted in growing debt, punitive tax levels and intolerable pressure on interest rates," she told parliament.

The package immediately brought some long-awaited good economic news. Both ANZ and the National Bank announced half percentage point cuts in their base rates to 15.75 per cent.

Bolger said New Zealand could no longer afford its present welfare spending, which makes up a third of all state spending.

"It is a generous provision by international standards and unsustainable for one of the worst performing economies in the developed world," he said.

Richardson signalled more cuts could come.

Yugoslavia freezes foreign exchange dealings

BELGRADE (AP) — The federal government Friday froze sales of foreign currencies for dinar and imposed limits on cash Yugoslav can take out of the country, the finance minister announced.

The government ordered banks to limit over-the-counter sales of foreign currencies for dinar to the equivalent of 1,000 Deutschmarks (\$650).

Yugoslav travelling abroad would not be permitted to carry exceeding that amount, Finance Minister Branimir Zekan told a news conference.

But he said the government decree "practically suspends all sale of foreign exchange to citizens," except for when funds are needed urgently for health or legal reasons.

The decree was designed to halt speculators drawing "excessive" foreign exchange from banks in anticipation of a dinar devaluation and transferring such funds abroad, Zekan said.

Federal Premier Ante Markovic made the dinar newly convertible Jan. 1 by pegging it at seven-to-one rate to Deutschmark as part of a sweeping economic reform package.

The reforms slashed runaway inflation from 2,500 per cent in 1989 to a projected 100 per cent this year, boosted the country's foreign exchange reserves and helped restore Yugoslav's confidence in the dinar.

But Yugoslavs, apparently unnerved by the country's uncertain political and economic future, have crowded banks in recent weeks to withdraw their hard currency savings.

FAO asks rich states to bridge N-S gap

ROME (R) — The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has said Friday that the gap between developed and poor countries was widening.

Its director-general, Edouard Saouma, called for more food aid to African nations threatened by famine.

"If the world has been capable of breaking down the political barrier between East and West, it should be able to attack the economic divide between North and South," Saouma said in a year-end message on the state of world food and agriculture.

He said record cereal harvests in 1990 of nearly 2,000 million tonnes — four per cent up on 1989 — had helped developed countries, but left parts of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean still struggling with hunger.

The harvest would allow cereal stocks to be replenished, but there remained an urgent need to mobilise international assistance for needy areas.

Ethiopia and Sudan, hit by year of civil war, would require massive assistance to avoid famine in 1991, the FAO chief said.

Other African nations that would need help next year would include Angola, Mozambique, Liberia and some in the Sahel.

Saouma said the breakdown of GATT trade negotiations because of squabbles on agricultural subsidies would hurt developing countries' trade by restrictions and fierce competition.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

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Studies urge Soviets to make fast, concrete shift to market system

WASHINGTON (R) — The Soviet Union is being told in the strongest terms by a major study that it must reform its ailing economy by turning it into a market system, or continue to face hard times.

The study, unveiled Friday, had been ordered by the Group of Seven industrial countries. It was undertaken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

"The imperative is to make sufficient progress at the beginning so that reform is seen as an irreversible break with the past and the process gains unstoppable momentum," the report said.

The report, which was greeted with praise by senior Soviet economists who advocated free-market policies, urged "authorities to move rapidly to give substance to their commitment to a market economy."

The position of the IMF, which framed much of the report, is that gradualism, as some have suggested, would only lead to more economic and perhaps, social, pain.

Even with quick reform, the future will be difficult for the ailing Soviet economy with economic downturn and an increase in unemployment almost certain.

"The old planning system has broken down but has not been dismantled. Meanwhile, the structures vital to the functioning of a market have yet to be put in place," it said.

Given the economy's dire straits, the study cautioned against vast financial help, arguing the Soviets are simply not in a position to out use assistance productively.

"We must stress that balance of payments assistance should accompany the introduction of a major and comprehensive reform programme," the report said. "Without such a reform,

additional financial resources would be of little or no lasting value."

The study recommended price liberalisation — letting prices ebb and flow with the forces of demand. But rents and prices of few essential consumer goods may need to be subsidised to a limited extent over the near term, it added.

In a separate study also released Friday, the European Commission said the Soviet economy "will drift toward collapse" without major reform.

Moscow will need between \$8 billion and \$11 billion next year in aid, even after the \$15 billion in assistance already pledged, said the study by the commission.

Meanwhile trade experts said Friday the resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze may cause U.S. companies to be even more cautious about investing in the Soviet Union.

Shevardnadze's surprise announcement Thursday, and his grim warning that the country was slipping toward "dictatorship," unnerved many world leaders.

In currency markets, the Deutschmark, has been harmed by fears that Germany's economy could be hurt by Soviet unrest.

Most of the several hundred U.S. companies pursuing Soviet ventures have moved cautiously, well aware of the country's political and economic problems.

With Shevardnadze's announcement, companies are going to be even more wary, analysts said.

"It's the uncertainty," said Jeffrey Burt, partner in charge of Soviet ventures for Arnold and Porter, a Washington law firm. "Are you dealing with

someone in the central government who's going to be there and has the authority? what's it going to be like down the road?"

"There is a very cautious, go-slow attitude," said Herd Adler, a partner at KPMG Peat Marwick who specialises in international deals. "There are opportunities, but there are also the risks."

Richard Fuchs, publisher of Bloc magazine, which follows business in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, said many callers had expressed concern in the past two days, and he predicted a slowdown in new deals.

Trade between the Soviet Union and United States has grown relatively slowly, to \$5 billion last year from \$2.3 billion in 1983, according to the Commerce Department.

This year, as the U.S. economy has softened, only \$4 billion of goods changed hands between the two countries over the first 10 months of the year, preliminary figures show.

Several big companies have announced major ventures in the Soviet Union this year. The largest is PepsiCo's agreement to swap its soda for Soviet vodka in a deal valued at \$3 billion over 10 years.

Such deals — and others that are only in the test phase — are unlikely to be affected unless the Soviet situation deteriorates.

In fact, Atlantic Richfield Friday said it had signed preliminary agreements for exploration and production of oil and gas in the Soviet far east.

Corporate executives will be watching closely over the next several weeks to see how the political turmoil in the Soviet Union is resolved.

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Central Bank official rates					
	Buy	Sell			
U.S. dollar	664.0	668.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	489.9	492.8
Pound Sterling	1252.3	1259.8	Dutch guilder	385.0	387.3
Deutschmark	434.1	436.7	Swedish crown	116.2	116.9
Swiss franc	506.2	509.2	Italian lira (for 100)	57.8	58.1
French franc	127.8	128.6	Belgian franc (for 10)	210.0	211.3

TODAY AT

Cinema CONCORD Tel: 677420

1- HER ALIBI
2- BEETLE JUSE
3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema NIJOU Tel: 675571

ARCTIC HEAT
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 p.m.

Cinema RAINBOW Tel: 625155

LETHAL WEAPON
Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema PHILADELPHIA Tel: 634144

Sylvester Stallone
LOCK UP
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30.

Cinema PLAZA Tel: 699238

The Fearful Road
(Arabic)
Show: 12:30, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:45 p.m.

Walesa sworn in as president

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Lech Walesa, the shipyard electrician who led the workers' movement that overthrew Poland's Communist rulers, took the oath of office Saturday as his country's first popularly elected president.

The 47-year-old labour activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the son of impoverished peasants, assumed the country's highest office at an inauguration ceremony before both houses of parliament.

Ten years after he led the shipyard strike that created Solidarity, the East Bloc's first independent trade union, and one year since he put together its first non-Communist government in more than 40 years, Walesa faces the challenge of transforming Poland into the prosperous, democratic society dreamed of by generations of his compatriots.

"I solemnly swear to the Polish people that I will be faithful to constitutional decisions," said Walesa in a firm, clear voice, holding up his right hand.

"I will protect the dignity of the nation, the sovereignty and security of the state, I swear... So help me God."

His wife, Danuta, stood at his side as the oath was administered by parliament speaker Mikolaj Kozakiewicz.

The departing president, Gen.

Wojciech Jaruzelski, was not invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

In December 1981, Jaruzelski, then Communist Party leader, led the martial law crackdown that suppressed Solidarity and resulted in Walesa's internment for 11 months. Solidarity regained its legal status in 1989 after extensive negotiations between the Communist authorities and the opposition led by Walesa.

The transfer of power was to be conferred later Saturday by Ryszard Kaczorowski, president of the anti-Communist government-in-exile that has been based in London since the Warsaw government fled the Nazis in 1939.

Kaczorowski, returning to his homeland for the first time, is to give Walesa an insignia of office and other prewar symbols of power in a ceremony at the royal castle, where Poland's first democratic constitution was written in 1791.

Walesa also will accept the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church, with a mass to be celebrated in honour of his presidency by Cardinal Jozef Glemp.

As president, Walesa's first task will be to nominate a prime minister and prepare for parliamentary elections.

Walesa announced Thursday that he will not be able to name a



Lech Walesa

prime minister until after the Christmas and New Year holidays.

He said he is wavering between two options: keeping a remolded caretaker cabinet until parliamentary elections in the spring or creating an all-new cabinet that will rule for a year until elections are held.

In statements since his landslide election on Dec. 9, Walesa has emphasised that his presidency will mark the culmination of a struggle to throw off foreign domination.

"We will lift our country up with the effort of the whole nation," Walesa pledged at a gathering to honour dozens of workers gunned down 20 years

ago during anti-government strikes. "We will fulfil the last wish of those killed."

But for the past centuries, free Poland has existed more in literature and song than in reality. Since 1795, Poland has enjoyed only 21 years of independence from foreign rule.

Walesa's critics fear he will rule in an iron-handed way and compare him to Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, who after a 1926 military takeover, allowed the trappings of democracy to continue but ruled as military commander.

Walesa won his office with 75 per cent of the vote, but the bitter election campaign split the Solidarity movement, leaving Walesa alienated from Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and many of his former advisers. After the ceremony, deputies rose to their feet and burst into prolonged applause and Walesa blinked back tears as the national anthem was played.

"From this moment solemnly begins the Third Polish Republic," Walesa said.

"The evil period is ending when the authorities of our state were chosen under foreign pressure or as a result of forced compromises."

"Today we take a fundamental step on the long and bloody road to rebuilding our independence."

Shekhar offers fresh hopes of ending violence

NEW DELHI (R) — India's new prime minister held out fresh hopes Saturday of ending secessionist and religious violence dividing the country but offered no quick solutions.

India's most pressing problems are independence movements in two states bordering Pakistan — Kashmir and Punjab — and Hindu-Muslim fighting over whether a mosque occupies a sacred Hindu site.

"I am prepared to discuss (the Punjab issue) with anyone who speaks to me as an Indian," said Chandra Shekhar, whose minority government took power last month.

He told a news conference the government was even prepared to amend the constitution if it would help. "I am not against any discussion... we want to make a plan for Punjab with the consultation of the people of Punjab," he said.

But he said the response so far from the wealthy agricultural state, where Sikhs have for a decade been trying to set up on their own, had been less positive than that in Kashmir.

The situation was gradually improving in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, where there had been a positive response from secessionist militants though he said it was still too early to hold elections there.

Kashmir remains a thorn in India's relations with Pakistan, which it claims supports the rebels, and the two sides made no progress on the issue in talks earlier in the week in Islamabad.

India has also accused Pakistan of training and arming Sikh militants in Punjab. More than 3,500 people have died in Punjab and a further 2,000 in Kashmir in separatist violence this year.

Shekhar made clear he wanted better relations with Pakistan, with which India has had three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, two of them about Kashmir.

"I want that relations with Pakistan should be true... the world is changing. If India and Pakistan want to play a role in this, they should settle their problems in a peaceful manner."

On Hindu-Muslim violence, only just beginning to ease off after two weeks in which more than 250 people have died, Shekhar said he would raise the issue with the chief justice on whether to refer it to the supreme court to decide.

Hindu militants insist that a 16th century mosque occupies land in the town of Ayodhya belonging to Lord Rama, one of the pantheon of Hindu gods, a debate eagerly latched onto by politicians, notably the Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP triggered a change of government last month when it withdrew support in a coalition headed by Vishwanath Pratap Singh partly because of Ayodhya.

Shekhar said there was little he could do legally to stop the explosive mix of religion and politics, noting similar efforts in other parts of the world had achieved scant success.

If there was adequate economic development, then people would not cling to the old divisions, he said.

In a separate development, Chandra Shekhar said Saturday he wanted problems with Pakistan to be resolved peacefully and was not worried whether Delhi's old foe possessed nuclear weapons.

"I want that relations with Pakistan should be true," Shekhar told a news conference.

"The world is changing. If India and Pakistan to play a role in this, they should settle their problems in a peaceful manner."

Asked about Pakistani nuclear capabilities, Shekhar said: "Even if they have the bomb there is no reason to be worried about it. Nobody is going to use it."

Senior Indian political sources quoted intelligence reports as saying Pakistan had at least seven nuclear bombs and had changed its strategy for their use from last resort to a pre-emptive strike.

Islamabad believes India, which exploded a nuclear device in 1974, has nuclear bombs.

Both countries deny having nuclear weapons.

Relations between the neighbours, which have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, deteriorated again this year over a revolt in Jammu and Kashmir.

Radical S. African black leader criticises talks

CAPE TOWN (Agencies) — The leader of the small, radical Azanian People's Organisation opened his group's tenth annual congress Saturday by criticising negotiations with the white-led government.

AZAPO is a black consciousness group that believes South African blacks must work together for their liberation without help from the dominant white minority.

In his opening address to the congress in the Langa township near Cape Town, AZAPO leader Ismail Msimang said President F.W. de Klerk's reforms had "produced nothing but violence, misery and confusion in the black community."

De Klerk has legalised opposition groups, including AZAPO, and eliminated some apartheid laws. He has pledged to end apartheid and negotiate power-sharing with the black majority.

Msimang said the congress might be the last before black people are betrayed "on the altar of an undemocratic, one-sided, imperialistic... process of negotiations."

The congress, attended by more than 500 delegates and guests, was expected to consider a resolution rejecting the negotiations during its two-day agenda.

Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, meanwhile, appealed to blacks and whites to work together for peace through democracy instead of prolonging confrontational tactics that have failed.

Buthelezi, leader of the Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Party, said in year-end messages it was up to blacks to instill democracy in South Africa.

"We will get the kind of government we deserve," he vowed. Buthelezi also called for blacks to resist political violence and intimidation.

Inkatha supporters have engaged in years of virtual warfare against Xhosa and other blacks loyal to the African National Congress, the main black opposition group.

Both groups oppose apartheid, but differ on the policies and leadership of a future South Africa.

Inkatha advocates a free-

market system and promotes tribalism, while the ANC backs more leftist and pan-tribal policies.

The ANC accuses Buthelezi of aligning himself with the government and instigating black faction fighting in a bid to spread his power base beyond the eastern Natal province, the traditional Zulu homeland.

Inkatha accuses the ANC of trying to dominate the black opposition movement.

Meanwhile anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela has held talks with De Klerk in defiance of an African National Congress (ANC) ban on secret meetings with the white government, a newspaper reported Saturday.

The Johannesburg Star said Mandela met De Klerk last Monday, a day after the ANC ended its first consultative conference and a day before De Klerk's hardline year-end address to the nation in which he lashed out at the ANC.

De Klerk accused Mandela and the ANC of resorting to "outraged rhetoric and policies that fan the flames of confrontation" after the movement gave his government an April 30 deadline to stop township violence, release political prisoners and allow exiles to return.

If these conditions were not met, the ANC warned it would cancel all peace talks with the government and resume guerrilla activities.

At the ANC conference, the first in 30 years since South Africa, delegates resolved that contact with the government would take place "without secrecy and confidentiality" and only after consultation with the organisation's policy-making 36-member National Executive Committee (NEC).

However an angry Mandela told the closing session of the conference secret and confidential meetings were at times essential.

He accused ANC members opposed to secret meetings as lacking understanding of the nature of negotiations, adding that had such meetings not taken place before, there would be no preliminary negotiations for a non-racial constitution.

Lithuanian premier urges West to take tougher Soviet stance

TOKYO (R) — Lithuania's premier urged Western governments Saturday to take a tougher stance against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to check a perceived slide toward dictatorship.

Kazimiera Prunskiene, prime minister of the independence-seeking Baltic republic, said Western powers should threaten to withhold support and aid for the Soviet Union because Gorbachev was courting hardliners.

"It's absurd for the West to keep up this unflinching support for Gorbachev regardless of his domestic policies," Prunskiene said in an interview with Reuters in Tokyo.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's resignation was a dramatic warning to the world that reactionaries in the old Communist Party elite and some parts of the military were gaining control, she said.

"He was being pushed out by the hardliners so he made a strategic move to send a signal to the world."

She added: "The reactionaries understand that the Soviet Union needs food and economic aid and they would be forced to give in to the liberal reformists if the West took a tougher stance."

Shevardnadze stunned Moscow and the world when he told parliament Thursday he was resigning to protest against a slide toward dictatorship.

The move stirred anxiety in the Soviet Baltic republics of

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, all headed by elected pro-independence governments.

Gorbachev, under pressure from hardliners, told deputies earlier this week he would declare a state of emergency in trouble spots including the three Baltic republics and Shevardnadze's homeland Georgia.

Prunskiene, who is scheduled to visit Australia before returning home on Dec. 29, said she may be forced to cut short her trip if Gorbachev cracks down on the Baltics.

"There were no incidents overnight and it's peaceful in Lithuania but we're monitoring the situation," she said.

Armed Soviet soldiers have begun patrolling the Lithuanian port Klaipeda and are authorised to search and arrest local citizens, aides accompanying Prunskiene said.

Prunskiene said the Baltics have lost a friend with the departure of Shevardnadze from the government.

"As a Georgian he could understand our aspirations and it was he who has kept the Soviet military from taking over in the Baltics," she said.

Yevgeny Primakov, Gorbachev's special envoy in the Gulf crisis, was a possible candidate to become foreign minister, Prunskiene said, adding that he was not likely to sympathise with the Baltic cause.

"Shevardnadze told me perso-

nally if there were any problems to contact him first. Thanks to him things have been peaceful until now."

The Baltic republics aim to regain the full independence they enjoyed between 1918 and their incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940.

Prunskiene is visiting Japan at the invitation of the Waco Corp Trading Company and will leave Sunday for Australia after meeting bankers and government officials.

Meanwhile Lithuanian lawmakers protested Soviet army patrols on the streets of the Baltic Port of Klaipeda, and its mayor labelled the military action a "gross interference" to civilian life. TASS reported Friday.

Col. Ivan Chernykh, commander of the Klaipeda Garrison, told Lithuanian authorities Wednesday that armed units would begin patrolling the streets and have the authority to check people's documents and make arrests, the official Soviet News Agency said. The patrols began Thursday.

They were ordered following alleged clashes between civilians and Soviet soldiers and sailors in the Baltic seaport, according to an editor with the independent Elita News Agency. The port has a large military presence.

According to Chernykh, soldiers with submachine guns were patrolling the streets in cars. TASS reported.

Croatia adopts new constitution

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia (AP) — The Croatian parliament has adopted a new constitution, giving Yugoslavia's second-largest state the right to secede from the federation, media reports said.

The move is likely to worsen the traditionally tense relations between Croats and minority Serbs in the republic.

The new constitution provides for Croatia to secede from Yugoslavia if a total of two-thirds of the parliamentary deputies vote for such a proposal.

A centre-right government defeated the ruling Communists in Croatian elections last spring.

A state-wide plebiscite would have to follow the legislative vote. A simple majority of the electorate would then be needed to vote for Croatia's independence.

The vote was preceded by an acrimonious debate over minority rights between ethnic Serbian and Croatian deputies in the legislature, the Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, reported.

It said that 16 deputies representing Croatia's 500,000-member Serbian minority walked out of the parliamentary session before the vote to protest what they claimed was the failure of the document to guarantee their national identity.

The Communist government of Serbia, the largest of Yugoslavia's six constituent republics, has strongly opposed moves toward secession.

Also Friday, ethnic Serbs in Knin, a town near the central Adriatic coast, proclaimed the autonomy of Krajina, the mostly Serbian area in which they live, saying it would remain part of Croatia only if the state stays within Yugoslavia.

"This is a great day for all Serbs," said Jovan Raskovic, political leader of the Serbian minority, as he raised the Serbian flag over Knin Castle, Radio Belgrade reported.

Ethnic Serbs, who claim the Croatian authorities are discriminating against them, say that if Croatia secedes from Yugoslavia, Krajina will declare its independence.

One policeman was killed and several other people have been wounded since August when Krajina Serbs declared themselves to be "in an uprising against the nationalist authorities in Zagreb."

He said when asked what she thought of a Japanese woman being appointed to the job.

The appointment of a woman was "an interesting development," she said. "But maybe it was overdue."

Ogata is the first woman to hold the top refugee post and only the second Japanese to head a U.N. agency, after Hiroshi Nakajima of the World Health Organisation. Her appointment was approved by the General Assembly Friday.

The world's refugees had increased from about eight million to 15 million in the past decade, Ogata said.

Japanese appointed head of UNHCR

TOKYO (R) — The newly appointed United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Saturday that being a Japanese and a woman would aid her in the search for new ways to protect the world's 15 million refugees.

Sadao Ogata, 63, a professor of international relations at Tokyo's Sophia University, told a news conference she would spend her three-year term in office searching for new formulas to define and protect economic and domestic refugees, as well as genuine refugees.

"Certainly, I have a slightly broader background, and I should have wider clients," Ogata

said when asked what she thought of a Japanese woman being appointed to the job.

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Cambodian National Council resumes talks

PARIS (AP) — The Supreme National Council, representing Cambodia's Vietnamese-backed government and three guerrilla factions, resumed talks Saturday to consider a U.N.-sponsored peace plan.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, who fell ill during the first day of talks Friday, was expected to rejoin the meeting of the 12-member council.

The talks were to conclude later Saturday.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, addressing Friday's opening session, warned that time was running out to reach a settlement and urged acceptance of the plan that would give the

United Nations a strong role in an interim government.

"The world has changed. Other priorities can and will require our attention," Dumas said. "The international community cannot indefinitely work out the fate of Cambodia if Cambodians themselves do not have the political will to do so."

He told a news conference that the talks had been "constructive," saying that the factions asked questions but did not reject the plan outright.

Hun Sen collapsed during the talks, apparently from fatigue, and was hospitalised. He was reported in satisfactory condition Friday.

Washington, citing abuses, cuts off aid to Guatemala

WASHINGTON (R) — A largely symbolic cut of U.S. military aid to Guatemala was triggered by Washington's disapproval over the Central American country's failure to solve the murder of an American and a lack of commitment to human rights, U.S. officials have said.

The United States Friday cut off military aid to Guatemala, charging that the government of President Vinicio Cerezo was not doing enough to stamp out human rights abuses. Military aid totalled about \$2.9 million in the 1990 fiscal year.

In announcing the cutoff, the U.S. State Department did not charge the Cerezo government with taking part in the abuses, but nevertheless blamed it for what it said was a failure to act against persistent violations.

"The United States wishes to express its deep disappointment with the lack of commitment of the government of Guatemala to protect human rights," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a statement.

In Guatemala, the Cerezo government said it was concerned by the U.S. decision, calling it a drastic move.

"The government hopes that this drastic action against Guatemala over the killing of an American citizen does not constitute further misunderstanding by the U.S. State Department..." it said.

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Doctor cuts nose off husband's suspected lover

MANILA (R) — A Philippine woman doctor has been charged with cutting off the nose of a maid she suspected of having an affair with her husband. Her husband, also a doctor, was charged with raping the 18-year-old maid at gunpoint at their home in Negros Occidental province. The maid said he raped her on 26 separate occasions. On pretext of treating injuries she inflicted in jealous rage, the woman doctor anaesthetised the maid before clipping off the right side of her nose, lawyers said. The couple were arrested after President Corason Aquino took an interest in a complaint filed by the maid.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The secret service sealed the entrance to the White House for an hour Thursday after an explosives-sniffing dog detected something amiss in a congressman's car. It turned out to be fertilizer. "Great fun," said Rep. Herbert H. Bateman, after a bomb specialist wearing a flak jacket and a protective helmet combed through his car. Bateman was in a group of Congress members just back from Saudi Arabia and was meeting with the president. The northwest gate to the White House, the official entrance used by visitors to the president, was closed. The driveway where Bateman's and about a dozen other congressional cars were parked was sealed off. Reporters were ordered to leave the grounds and kept in the nearby press briefing room as Bateman's car was carefully examined. Finally, Bateman was summoned from the White House and interviewed by secret service agents.

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